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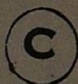
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BRAHMAN SETTLEMENTS IN KERALA

HISTORICAL STUDIES

KESAVAN VELUTHAT

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PREFACE

The contents of this collection were prepared on different occasions. The cohesion necessary for a disciplined monograph, therefore may be lacking here. So also a few repetitive statements may be, found in the text. Yet, read together, it would give an integrated picture of the rise and growth of the brahmanical establishment in Kerala. And, that is my apology for the present voiume.

I have been obliged by a large a number of individuals and institutions in undertaking these studies and bringing out this volume. I thank especially Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan, Dr. R. Champakalakshmi and Mr. M. Gangadharan and also M/s. Kamal Printers, Parappanangadi and Sandhya Publications, Calicut University.

Kesavan Veluthat.

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I present to the academic world this work of Sri. Kesavan Veluthat. As a student of the post-graduate course in History (1972-'74) he showed keen interest in the social history of ancient India which made me suggest that he could take up the "Early Aryan Brahman Settlements of Kerala" for optional M. A. Dissertation, an item being introduced for the first time in that year. Fortunately that has proved to be the beginning of his ardent romance with historical research. In this first assignment he went far beyond the requirements prescribed for a tertiary level dissertation, picking up the Vaṭṭeḻuttu script, analysing primary sources and exploring the possibilities of identifying some of the early settlements not yet identified. After passing out with first class and first rank he continued this good work at the Jawaharlal Nehru University while pursuing his M. Phil. course. He has brought to bear on the subject a close acquaintance with Tamiḻ, Sanskrit and Malayāḷam sources, both inscriptional and literary, and a modern scientific approach. The present collection includes parts of his M. A. dissertation, a couple of separate research papers published elsewhere and further papers embodying his most recent work in the field. I am glad to notice the gradual widening of scope and deepening of understanding which augers well for the future of historical research in Kerala.

This is an area where academic work was held up for a long time due to a variety of factors. The field was opened up with the publication of a number of inscriptions in the *Travancore Archaeological Series*, *Ramavarma Research Institute Bulletins*, *Kerala Society Papers* and *South Indian Inscriptions* in the first half of the present century. Along with this came the editing and publishing of Tamiḻ, Sanskrit and Malayāḷam literary works by various scholars like U. V. Swaminatha Iyyar

S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, M. Raghava Ayyangar, Dr. C. Kunjan Raja, Dr. V. Raghavan, Dr K. Kunjunni Raja, Ulloor S. Parameswara Ayyar, Attoor Krishna Pisharodi, Vadakkumkur Rajaraja Varma, P. V. Krishna Varier, Suranad Kunjan Pillai, P. V. Krishnan Nayar, Dr. P. K. Narayana Pillai, Dr. K. N. Ezhuthachan and Prof. Elamkulam Kunhan Pillai. A few of the inscriptions were dated in local eras or the regnal years of kings whose place in history remained obscure. They were drafted in a transitional form of early Malayāḷam language which often played tricks on the pioneering epigraphists like Hultzsch, Burnell, Kielhorn, Ellis, Gundert, Venkayya, T. A. Gopinatha Rao, K. V. Subrahmanya Ayyar, A. S. Ramanatha Ayyar and A. Govinda Warrier. Moreover, the epigraphists were not unduly concerned with political or social history in wider perspective.

The advent of Prof. Elamkulam Kunjan Pillai brought about revolutionary changes in the study of history in Kerala. He was able to group the early inscriptions according to their time sequence, identify the rulers upto the beginning of the 12th century as the Cēra Perumāḷs of Koduṅgallūr (Makōtai or Mahōdayapura) and reconstruct the political and social history of the entire period between the 9th and 16th centuries in outline. He used this knowledge as the key to open the mysteries of Nambudiri domination, matriliny, feudal practices and cāvēr system or suicide squads in early medieval Kerala.

Strangely enough, it never occurred to him that the temple-centred villages which yielded the majority of Cēra inscriptions were actually the early Brahman settlements of Kerala, and that a large number of donors and witnesses figuring in those records were the ancestors of present day Nambudiris. He was probably misled by the absence of the suffix 'Sharma' in those names and their colloquial forms like Cāttan (Śāstṛśarman), Cēntan (Jayanta), Tēvan (Dēva), Cirikaṇṭan (Śrīkaṇṭha), Tuppan (Subrahmaṇya), etc. He even argued that the majority of landowners were non-Brahmans, that the village councils and temple committees consisted of Brahmans and non-Brahmans alike and that they possessed an elective democratic constitution.

When the present writer took up the study where Prof. Elamkulam had left it, a greater familiarity with those localities in central Kerala made him recognise the fact that several of the 'villages' (grāma) were still existing as Nambudiri settlements and that the family names and personal names figuring in those records continued unaltered even after a thousand years. This finding led me to give more serious attention to Nambudiri traditions in regard to ancestral village affiliations and particularly those related to the thirty-two Brahman settlements of the *Keralolpatti* chronicle. An attempt was made in my study of the history of the later Cēra kingdom to identify the traditional settlements in the light of contemporary archaeological and literary evidence and to discuss their system of local government as well as land tenure. Sixteen of the traditional Brahman settlements could be traced even prior to the 12th century and many more had already come to be known from post-Cēra inscriptions and literature.

Mr. Kesavan has continued this work of identification of the early Brahman settlements and the reconstruction of their social history. His explorations have taken the number of the known early settlements to thirty-one with only one of the traditional group remaining to be located. He has also been able to bring out the significant fact that the Cellūr or Perumcellūr settlement, the northernmost and therefore most probably the earliest, has not only been mentioned in Sangam works but actually associated with the performance of a yajña by Paraśurāma, the mythical patron-diety of Brahmans in Kerala. This would enable us to attribute the starting point of Aryan Brahman colonisation to the Sangam age.

In the collection of Tiruvalla copper plates, put together some time in the 12th century and described by prof. Elamkulam as the "first book in Malayāḷam language", we can trace the gradual development of Tiruvalla grāma from a small settlement to a huge agrarian corporation with landed property and assets all over Kerala. Factual studies by T. A. Gopinatha Rao, K. V. Subrahmanya Ayyar, T. K. Joseph and Raghavan Nambiyar have thrown light on several aspects of these

temple accounts. Prof. Elamkulam and the present writer have analysed some of the social and economic implications of statements found there. Taking all these into consideration Kesavan brings together all the known facts within the conceptual frame of the development of feudal institutions in Kerala. He also produces in another paper a handy profile of the Brahman settlements of the Cēra period in terms of their social and political organisation. This is used as a springboard for plunging into the post-Cēra period, documenting and analysing for the first time the process of decay which overtook some of the settlements, the growing prosperity of others, the shifting of leadership from one group to another and the rise and development of fresh centres. Following this critical survey there is a skilful attempt to isolate the pattern of changes found in the organisation and administation pertaining to the Brahman settlements of Kerala from the disintegration of central authority to the advent of the Portuguese. The passage from semi-autonomous to autonomous status, the destruction of the corporate character by domination of individual proprietors and the consequent unbridled growth of exploitation are very well expounded, following the steps of Prof. Elamkulam. The learned Professor had succeeded earlier in exposing the feudal character of what was generally taken by historians like K. P. Padmanabha Menon and A. S. Ramanatha Ayyar as a form of sacerdotal dominion. He had explained with the help of evidence how the spiritual overlordship of the Brahmans had been founded on their economic stronghold cultivated assiduously through the centuries. Now Mr. Kesavan has improved upon the statement of Prof. Elamkulam by showing that the phenomenon was not the outcome of sheer cruelty and caprice on the part of Nambudiris but the end product of a steady course of development in conformity with generally known tendencies of the feudal social structure.

Again the paper on Caṭṭas and Bhaṭṭas, placed as an appendix here in the context of the geographically restricted general theme of the monograph, is of much intrinsic value. The seed of this concept is laid in Prof. Elamkulam's new interpretation of the 'Caṭṭas' of the 'śālai'

with the help of references in the Pārthivapuram cnpper plates of Karunataḍakkan (866 A. D). He demonstrated that the 'Caṭṭas' were Vedic scholars enrolled in the 'śālais' or Vedic colleges attached to the temples. He underlined the paramilitary character of the training received by the Brahman scholars, thereby providing a satisfactory explanation to the riddle of the repeated Cōḻa invasions of Kandaḷūr Śālai. With this clue from the history of Kerala the present writer examined the history of the spread of Aryan Brahman culture in South India. In this context certain references in Udyotana Suri's *Kuvalaya-mala* and the Talagunda Pillar inscription of the Kadamba king Kākutsthavarman assumed new significance. I went further and equated the 'śālai' with the 'ghaṭikā' putting forward the hypothesis that from the Pallava period onwards the scholarly and warlike bands of Caṭṭas and Bhaṭṭas organised in 'śālais' or 'ghaṭikās' played a vital role in promoting and maintaining the new Hindu monarchies, thus accelerating the process of 'Aryanisation' of South India. The next logical step was to search for the prototypes of these Caṭṭas and Bhaṭṭas in the early records of North India. Mr. Kesavan has carried this out in a comprehensive manner. He has produced weighty evidence about an elusive group of Caṭṭas and Bhaṭṭas, considered suspicious by the donors of landgrants and condemned unanimously by the Dharma-śāstras but evidently thriving at the expense of royal and private land everywhere. This may be the narrow head of a submerged iceburg. Further enquiry may reveal a whole network of quasi-feudal institutions attached to Brahman settlements which enabled the "classical" Hindu culture to spread throughout the nooks and corners of India. It is my view that the semi-religious paramilitary body of Caṭṭar must be placed along side the semi-political paramilitary body of the Cāvēr-suicide squads known by different names in different parts of India - to have a more integrated picture of spiritual and secular organisation which sustained society through the turbulent periods of anarchy in early medieval India. Their elucidation will probably expose the hidden foundations of Indian feudalism, some aspects of which have been clearly brought out in the work of Prof. R. S. Shnrma and his disciples. Prof. Sharma has rightly identified the early land grants as

the crucial records revealing the slow development of feudalism through the parcelling out of land and political power. The texts of such documents found in North India have now been studied, or they are currently being studied, from this angle. Similar documents from the South, more numerous and more extensive, deserve to be examined in a similar fashion. This is what I have started and what Mr. Kesavan has carried forward in the case of Kerala. The appendix on Caṭṭas and Bhaṭṭas would also go to suggest that even a straight-forward study of the land grant system is not enough, that it is necessary to go behind the land-grants and explore the totality of the situation by getting at the real connotation of obscure terms with the help of a comparative study of institutions found in different regions. That the majority of the grants were given to Brahmans and other priests and monks in the North and South imposes a serious handicap on historical reseaarch. The political, military and commercial aspects of Indian feudalism could perhaps be studied in greater detail from the records available in peninsular India. This can only be mentioned here as a possible line of research in future for which the works of Dr. N. Karashima of Tokyo and his associate Dr. Y. Subbarayalu of Madurai have been laying the foundations in recent years.

Before closing this note, let me try to dispel any possible misunderstanding about the character of this collection of papers by reiterating the fact that the significance of Brahmanical settlements go far beyond Brahmanical settlements and that the history of Kerala, when it is properly studied, opens out in to the complex history of the evolution of society in all parts of India.

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I

INTRODUCTORY

The role of the Aryans in transforming Indian society cannot be exaggerated. This is more true of South India. For the purpose of this study, however, the term "Aryan" is applied to the groups of people who came originally from North India with the Sanskrit language and the Sanskritic ways of life. Although they included traders, chieftains and missionaries of heterodox sects like Jainism and Buddhism, for practical considerations of space and time, this study is limited to the problem with regard to brahmans.

Till recently, the *sanctum sanctorum* of history in Kerala was consecrated to legends. It was Logan in 1886 who, for the first time, attempted to differentiate "Traditionary History" from "History from other sources". Yet, he had no access to the many unpublished and unnoticed inscriptions and literary works. K P Padmanabha Menon, in his four-volume *History of Kerala* (completed in 1916), has tried to pursue the question further; but he too suffered from the limitations of Logan. Many traditional scholars have tackled the problem in their fashion; and they have reduced to writing many living traditions. At the same time, the princely states of Travancore and Cochin started the archaeological departments, and their *Annual Reports* brought fresh materials to the

notice of students. So also, the *Travancore Archaeological Series* and the *Bulletins of the Ramavarma Research Institute* brought to light many inscriptions, literary works and photographs of historical monuments. Simultaneously, the relevance of the so-called *Sangam* literature to the history of Kerala was appreciated. Many *Manipravalam* works were discovered and published. Making use of all these materials, Prof. Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai went far ahead of earlier scholars. But he also failed to realise the crux of the present problem and his way of judging the past in the light of present: day social values has marred his objectivity. Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan has gone further, by discovering more evidences and by appreciating the social function of tradition. He too has not taken up the question in sufficient detail, and thus missed some crucial evidences in the *Sangam, Manipravalam* and Sanskrit literary works. A reappraisal of the question, therefore, would not be out of place.

Inscriptions form the first category of sources. Many of them have been deciphered, interpreted and published. Some of them, recently discovered and deciphered by Dr. Narayanan, Mr. Raghava Varier and the present author have also been made use of. The corpus of *Sangam* literature, Sanskrit works like the *Avantisundari* of Daṇḍin (c. 7th century), the *Mushakavamsakavya* of Atula (c. 11th century), the *Sukasandesa* of Lakṣmīdāsa and the *Kokilasandesa* of Uddaṇḍa (c. 15th century), and *Manipravalam* works like the *Unniyaticaritam, Unniyaccicaritam, Unniccirutevicaritam, Kokasandesam, Unnunilisandesam* etc. (c. 14th-15th centuries) etc. are useful. Monuments have been renovated from time to time; still they are also useful as they retain the basic plan and some of the old forms. Some family records also have been consulted. Legends, not as *prima facie* history, but as an index to the strength of the 'memory of human group experience', have been examined; and in this respect, those references which are corroborated by the more concrete evidences and which supplement and clarify the existing body of knowledge have been employed.

It is well known from puraṇic references, Aśokan Edicts, Graeco-Roman literature, Tamil-Brahmi cave labels etc., that Kerala was not a

terra incognita to the North even before the Christian era. The literature of the *Sangam* was almost contemporaneous with these references, and in it Kerala is an integral part of the socio-cultural unit called Tamiḻakam. The society depicted in that literature is one based on geography and occupation. The four-fold division of society based on birth, though not unknown, had not percolated to the lower strata of society. But the presence of brahmans at least in the courts of chieftains and their influence upon them are evidenced by that literature. Many of the poets who composed that literature were either brahmans or natives with Aryan brahman names and culture. At least one of the famous brahman settlements of Kerala, viz. Cellūr, celebrated in tradition as one of the northern-most and, therefore, possibly among the earliest, could be identified in the *Sangam* literature as a centre of Vedic religion and with a strong tradition of Paraśurāma. This would suggest that the process of Aryan brahman migration to, and settlement in, Kerala had begun as early as the age of the *Sangam*.

By the ninth century, the Cēra Kingdom was revived with Mahōdayapuram as its new capital. Many inscriptions dating from that period have come down to us, and the Vāḻappaḷḷi copper plate of Rājaśēkhara is the earliest known among them (A.D. c. 830). Vāḻappaḷḷi is an *upagrama* (subsidiary village settlement) of Tiruvalla, one of the southern-most, and probably latest, brahman settlements reputed in tradition. This shows that by the beginning of the ninth century, even the latest of traditional brahman settlements of Kerala was so well-established and prosperous as to have *upagramas*. Similarly, twenty-two brahmans of the same settlement, Tiruvalla, are recorded to have been established in Tirupparappu (in Kanyakumari district) as early as the close of that century The affiliations of Tirupparappu with Tiruvalla are endorsed by survival. This also shows the antiquity and prosperity of Tiruvalla as early as the ninth century. Daṇḍin, the famous poet who lived in the Pallava court at Kāñcīpuram during the 7th century was full of praise for brahmans from Kerala. This shows that orthodox brahmanical culture had taken deep roots in Kerala by the seventh century, A.D. On the whole, therefore, it may be assumed that the more

important brahman settlements of Kerala took shape between the closing years of the *Sangam* age and the seventh century, A D.

Inscriptions and literary evidences show that it was immediately before the establishment of these settlements in Kerala that they occupied the Karṇāṭaka region. This in turn was a continuation of similiar settlements in the Koṅkaṇ and Saurāṣṭra coasts. All these settlers cherish the belief that their land was created and donated to them by Paraśurāma. The Paraśurāma legend originated in Gujarat, more specifically in the peninsula called Śūrpāraka and it is likely that this legend also moved along with the moving people. In other words, the brahman settlements of Kerala constituted the last links of a long chain of migration moving along the westcoast and carrying with them the tradition of Paraśurāma.

It is well-known that the Cālūkyas have claimed to have conquered the Keralas and Kadambas and that they were zealous patrons of brahmanical Hinduism. An inscription of Kīrtivarman II discovered from Kerala shows that the Cālūkyan claim was not altogether an empty boast. So also, the tradition that Mayūravarman Kadamba, who also figures prominently in inscriptions, was instrumental in establishing the brahman settlements in Karṇātaka, together with the evidence of Kadamba influence over Kerala afforded by the Edakkal cave inscription of Viṣṇuvarman Kadamba, testifies to the assumption that it may have been under the Cālūkya-Kadamba influence that the brahman settlements of Kerala came into existence. The Kadambas are described to have been conquered by the Cālūkyas.

In the traditional accounts of the early brahman settlements embodied in the *Keralolpatti*, it is related that 36000 of them were presented with arms (śastrabhikṣā) by Paraśurāma, in order to enable them to "protect and rule Kerala, the 160 *kaṭams* of land between Gokarṇam and Kanyākumāri". Epigraphic and literary evidences as well as survivals show that there was an armed militia of the brahmans known as Caṭṭas in the South, which had its origin probably in the

North as early as the Gupta period or even before. In the South, they had a peculiar educational-military-missionary organisation known as the *ghatika* or *salai*. In fact, Mayūravarman himself is described to have been originally a brahman disciple of the famous *ghatika* of Kāñci who realised the necessity of muscular power. It is quite possible that to the political vacuum that was Kerala came the brahmans with their peculiar para-military organisation. This would suggest that it was not only by the "art of peace" but also by "force of arms" that they expanded to this part of the country.

Tradition has it that the brahmans were established in Kerala in sixty-four villages. However, in this context Kerala means the land between Gōkarṇam and Kanyākumāri. Thirty-two of them are said to have been north of river Perumpuḻa in the Tuḷunāḍu and they have been identified by Saletore. In seeking to identify the remaining thirty-two, to the south of Perumpuḻa in Kerala proper, it could be seen that eighteen have yielded inscriptions from the locality itself mentioning the village settlement, four figure prominently in inscriptions from other places three are mentioned in contemporary or near-contemporary literature and six have come down to this day with their continuing brahmanical traditions and structural temples. In fact, twenty-three of them survive today. Thirty-one out of the thirty-two could, therefore, be identified satisfactorily. Apart from these original 32 ones, there came into being several others, by fusing together elements from the already existing ones. Thus, many *upagramas* and other independent settlements developed, constituting a network of them through the length and breadth of Kerala, with command over land and a large number of tenants and the entailing feudal privileges. In fact, by the close of the eighth century, the brahman settlements had become a vital force in society to such an extent that society itself was completely reoriented with these groups as the superior elements. This has been shown to be one of the causative factors in the revival of the Cēra kingdom. The power of these settlements was expressed through the king's council known as the Nāḷu Tali which represented the brahman settlements of Kerala at the Cēra capital, Mahōdayapura.

It could be seen that it was on the fertile plains rather than on the hilly regions or the coastal tract that the original settlements took shape. However, most settlements are on the banks of rivers; and many of them are found clustered in the more fertile regions. Thus, nine settlements out of the thirty-two are found on the Pambā Valley, thirteen on the greater Pariyār and five on the Pērār. This explains the sudden emergence of a number of inscriptions recording either land-grants or settlement of issues pertaining to land immediately after the brahman settlements had been established. In other words, agriculture registered a rapid increase. This can be better appreciated against the background of the facts that the settled regions described in the *Sangam* literature are mainly on the hills, that calendar was introduced to South India by the Aryans and possibly that iron ploughshare also was introduced by them. This further explains the need for the well-knit fabric of administration they had in the village councils which worked as an efficient entrepreneur in the field of agriculture. And, the vitality and dominance of these groups are not far to seek.

A very important fact about the brahman settlements in Kerala is that they were essentially temple-centred and that the temple was synonymous with the brahman settlement and *vice-versa*. The temple committee was the village assembly and it looked after the affairs of the property belonging to the temple and the brahman settlers. However for want of sufficient source material, a detailed study of the growth of the brahman settlements by which they claimed superiority over the rest of society and managed to re-orient the semi-tribal, semi-nomadic society into a temple-centred, agrarian, caste-society, is not easy to make. But a lengthy copper plate inscription, pertaining to one of them, namely Tiruvalla, offers a case study. It runs into 620 lines and is ascribed to A.D. c. 12th century. It is seen that the temple possessed a literally fabalous extent of land Donors from very distant places including Ceylon had made donations to the temple. In addition to land, the temple possessed wealth in the form of quantities of gold. The temple used to grant loans and acted as a bank. Often, the right to exact taxes from certain villages was made entirely over to the temple and in one

case, the temple committee was placed above the "wrath of kings and feudatories". The different daily and seasonal ceremonies of the temple are described at length. In describing the Ōṇam festtival, the share due to each functionary is given, indicating thereby the position of each in society and pointing to the level of social stratification. It is also seen that the practice of granting land on service tenure, whereby occupations were made hereditary, had already begun. The development of feudal institutions and the proliferation of sub-castes also could be discerned from the document. The temple looked into such public utility services as education, banking and hospial. In short, the process by which a small brahman colony grew both in space and in the range of economic, social and political activities into a large agrarian feudal corporation is typically illustrated in the case of the Tiruvalla settlement.

Most inscriptions of the period of the Cēra kingdom of Mahōdaya-pura (A.D. c. 800-1124) pertain to the brahman settlements. They record transactions of temple-centred brahman settlements related to the organisation and administration of the settlement. A couple of records of the immediate post-Cēra period, i. e the Kiḷimānūr record and the Kollūr Maḍham Plates, throw much light on the nature of organisation. of the settlements. It is clear from a study of the documents in general that the affairs of a settlement was managed by a council known as the *Ur* or *Sabhai*. Prof. Elamkulam had the impression that such councils were constituted by brahmans and non-brahmans alike. Examining the evidences more closely, Dr. M G.S. Narayanan has suggested that the members of these councils were exclusively brahmans. A step further, the present writer has shown that the names of witnesses etc. given in the numerous inscriptions are those of brahmans and that many families figuring in those records survive to this day. It is clear, therefore, that to be the members of the village councils there was the restriction of *varna*. Moreover, qualifications like the ownership of property and proficiency in the Vedas appear to have been prescribed.

It was from this council that the executive committee was selected. This committee was known as *pāratai (parishad)*. The strength of this

committee was often two, although this need not have been very rigid. Apart from the *paratai*, we come across a general secretary, the *potuval*, and an accountant, the *variyan*. When certain specific endowments were made for a particular ceremony or festival or the maintenance of a shrine, a special committee was constituted to manage the affairs of that endowment. This committee was known as the *kanam* or *gana*.

The village council was mainly concerned with the administration of properties owned collectively by the temple-centred brahman settlement, known as the *devasvam* or the property of the deity. They also managed the affairs of the temple. They met on the premises of the temple, often presided by the representative of the king or the king himself, and decided unanimously the course of their action. A code of conduct, known as the Mūḻikkaḷa Kaccam, followed universally in all the villages, was in vouge. This laid down general principles governing the procedure of the village councils. If somebody from among the members of the *paratai* or *sabhai* violated the terms of decisions of the council, severe punishments were imposed upon them, which included payment of fines. confiscation of his properties, forfeiture of a seat in the *sabhai* and even banishment from the village. Such abrogators were ften equated with men guilty of the *panchamahapapas*. These imprecations were particulary significant, for, rather than senseless curses quoted from the scriptures, they aimed at instilling the fear of a potential danger of being ostracised from the society, ordained according to the principles of *varnasramadharma*. Earlier scholars like Prof. Elamkulam and Prof. Mahalingam have represented these councils to be democratic popular assemblies. Popular they were certainly not; nor were they democratic. They were, at best, oligarchic caste corporations of a feudal character.

Feudal tendencies overwhelmed the Cēra monarchy by the beginning of the twelfth century and ultimately the kingdom fell into pieces in A.D. 1124. This loss of political unity, however, did not mean political anarchy. In fact, the network of brahman settlements, with which the land of Kerala had been covered by this time, acted as one of the uni-

fying forces in Kerala in the post-Cēra period. The settlements grew more powerful and began to amass larger extent of wealth and exert greater influence in society and polity. Different sections of population were enlisted in the service of the temple-centred brahman settlements both as tenants and servants. The reorientation of society on typical Hindu lines, which had been begun under the Cēra kingdom or even before, was completed during this period. At the same time, some settlements, very few in number, became extinct due probably to extinction of families as a result of the eldest member alone marrying from the community. However, the general picture is that of growth and prosperity. Anothr feature noticeable during the post-Cēra period is the loss of the importance of the Nālu Taḷi and the settlements which constituted it. Evidently, the Perumāḷ's council lost its importance when the Perumāḷ was no longer there. Two other settlements, viz. Panniyūr and Śukapuram, assumed prominence and took up the leadership. In course of time, these two settlements fell out and the whole of the brahman community in Kerala was aligned into two rival camps under the leadership of the two. Medieval literature abounds in reference to the quarrels between the two settlements. Different principalities of medieval Kerala espoused the cause of either of the two, and to an extent, the political fortunes of Kerala in this period have been greatly influenced by this quarrel.

Serious changes overtook the character of the brahman settlements in the post-Cēra period. The control of the central authortiy, however weak it was, was taken away following the disintegration of the Cēra kingdom. The strict procedure of the village councils is not met with in post-Cēra records. The corporate character of these councils gradually gave way to domination of individual families for many reasons. These individuals themselves owning huge estates as *brahmasvam* or brahman's property, controlled the properties of the temple also. The Mūḻikkaḷa Kaccam was obviously thrown to the winds. Each settlement was becoming a law unto itself. They came to possess extra-ordinary powers and each settlement became something like a legally constituted political subregion. This was called *sanketa*, with unlimited temporal

power within its jurisdiction independent of the local chieftain. The *sanketa* organisation, controlling the landed property, dictated the pattern of land tenure. The fixity of tenure enjoyed by tenants under the Cēra kingdom was gradually removed, and feudul landlordism came to develop in Kerala. Prof. Elamkulam has argued that it was by appropriating the property given to the temples by non-brahman landowners that brahmans in medieval Kerala became landlords. This prejudice of cruelty and caprice on the part of brahmans was a result of his hypothesis of the non-brahman constitution of the village councils and the "Hundred Years War", both of which have been rejected by recent researches.

Kerala was the farthest point on the western side in the southward movement of the Aryan frontier in India. The history of the brahman community in this part of the country is thehistory of the transformation of a society as a result of the contacts with and superimposition of a more advanced material culture. This element worked as the agency which affiliated Kerala to Indian civilization, reorienting the semi tribal society and polity in Kerala on the "classical" Hindu lines. From the age of the *Sangam*, when the earliest brahman settlement in Kerala was established, to the close of the eighth century when the land was almost covered with a network of brahman settlements, Kerala was a crucible of social transformation. The establishment of the first "Hindu" monarchy early in the ninth century was the culmination of the "Aryanising" forces, introduced through the agency of the brahman settlements, at work. Under the later Cēra kingdom, the brahman settlements consoldiated their position in this part of the country, so much so that the land was hailed to be *brahmakshatra* or the land of brahman rule created and donated to brahmans by Paraśurāma himself. The success with which the brahmans met in Kerala was the success of better agricultural techniques and better organising ability in a society which was yet to emerge from tribal status. The brahmans, who had become the superior elements in society, captured the apex of the feudal pyramid and they were thus able to dictate the pattern of socio-cultural developments in this part of the country.

The story of the development and growth of the brahmanical establishment in Kerala, therefore, offers a case study in the reorientation of a typically non-Aryan society on "Hindu" lines with necessary mutations and adaptations to suit local necessities. The dispersal of ideas and institutions, with which the whole of the Indian subcontinent was made part of one civilization, could be brought out with greater confidence if similar studies are conducted with regard to other parts of the country. At the same time, this forms only one of the several forces and the author does not entertain any prejudice that brahmans were responsible for the development of Indian civilization. What he wants to state is that it is only by studying the development of different institutions and by integrating the results of such studies that a proper appreciation of the history of any civilization is possible. The present volume pretends to give an integrated picture of the growth of one of the major institutions on the periphery of Indian civilization. If it succeeds in adding another grain to the existing corpus of knowledge, its purpose is accomplished.

II

CELLUR - AN EARLY SETTLEMENT

Cellūr or Perumcellūr is a village identifiable with the present-day Taliparamba in Cannanore district. It is one of the northernmost of traditional brahman settlements of Kerala[1]. It lies on the banks of the river Paraśśini, near Ēḻimalai; and these two factors have made the village geographically important[2]. In the present paper, an attempt is made to bring to light some aspects of the history of this village as one of the early brahman settlements in Kerala. Evidences from the *Sangam* literature, medieval Sanskrit and Maṇipravāḷam works and inscriptions are used for the purpose.

In a love song by Madurai Marutan Iḷanākanār[3], the lady companion of the heroine confronts the hero departing unwillingly at the end of a secretive night rendezvous with his lady love and addresses him in the following words:

> "You go round and round in your beautiful chariot, meeting us and talking to us of many things;
>
> "You are yourself responsible for prolonging the agony of your heart which grows feverish at the remembrance of the superb breasts of the heroine, who is shielded from the sight of all men,

"like the slim-waisted high pillar at Cellūr - the place resplendant with the never-extinguished (sacred) fire - the pillar that wears round its middle the chord of the sacrifice accomplished with hard labour by that high god armed with the battle-axe which scattered the murderous elephants in the course of extirpating royal families..."

The casual references in this love song are suggestive of many ideas. The never-extinguishing sacrificial fire points to the Vedic culture of that village and the association of that place with Paraśurāma indicates that the brahmanical culture of Celiūr conformed to that of the rest of brahman settlements elsewhere on the western coast of peninsular India. It is well-known that the Paraśurāma or Bhārgavarāma tradition is cherished by all the brahmans of the west coast. The tradition originated in the Sourāṣṭra region and moved gradually southward[4]. Archaeological evidences also go to suggest that the brahmanical tradition of Vedic sacrifices moved to the south along the west-coast. For instance, the Vadagaon-Madhavpur inscription, discovered from a site associated with ancient brick structures and Satavahana coins, speaks of a Vājapēya Yajña performed by a person of the Kāśyapa Gōtra[5]. This reference, attributed to the second or first century B.C., has its counterpart in the mention of a sacrifice in literature in a village further south. This is further endrosed by another song by the same poet, Madurai Marutan Iḷanakānār, in which Cellūr is described as a place where gods receive sacrifice[6]. Prof. Elamkulam believes that the Cēri in Cellūr, mentioned in *Akam* 216, is a brahman colony - a Pārppānaccēri[7]. If this is relied on, the present-day Pāppiniśśēri in the vicinity of Taliparamba may be taken as a relic of the old name. However, it can be safely asserted that a brahman colony, with strong Vedic culture and sacrificing tradition, and also cherishing the Paraśurāma lengend, was firmly established at Cellūr as early as the age of the Sangam and that it formed part of a long chain of migration originating from Gujarat.

In a different song in *Akananuru*, Aiyūr Muṭavanār speaks of Ātan

Eḻini, the lord of Celli or Cellūr[8]. In this song, Cellūr is described as a place where Kōśa boys played with garlands wrought of different kinds of flowers plucked from different regions. That Cellūr was associated with the Kōśas is very significant. They are mentioned by Mamūlanār elsewhere in the *Akananuru* to have been sent by the Mōriyas to attack Mōkūr[9]. Paraṇar describes the Kōśas to have entered the territory of Nannan, the ruler of Ēḻimalai, by adopting a policy of down right massacre[10]. The proximity of Cellūr to Ēḻimalai and the presence of Kōśar or Vaṭukar, i. e. the Northerners, at both the places would suggest that this region was familiar to the Northerners; and they were sent by the imperial Mauryas. Nannan, the illustrious ruler of Ēḻimalai, himself is suggested to have come from the Deccan, long before the Kośa intrusion, and he is stated to have been related to the Nandas of Pāṭalīputra[11]. If this is true, the associatian of Cellūr with a dynasty from the North in the pre-Mauryan days is very significant. However, it is clear that by the period of the Mauryan invasion of Mokūr on the Northern border of Kerala, Cellūr was quite familiar to the North. It is possible that it was in this way that brahman settlers from the North came to have contacts with this part of the country. Trade relations with the South, as evidenced by the *Arthasastra*, also may have acclerated this process[12]. However, it may be suggested that it was in the post-Mauryan period that the establishment of the brahman colony at Cellūr took place. This view is in conformity with the chronology of earlier settlements on the west coast to the north of Kerala.

Concerning the period between the close of the age of the Sangam and the re-establishment of the three major kingdoms of Tamiḻakam, there is a dearth of source material and hence this period is literally a dark period in the history of this part of the country. Still, the continuity of Cellūr as a brahman settlement could be assumed through this period, It was one of the prominent brahman settlements under the Cēra kingdom of Mahōdayapura (A.D.c. 800-1124) also. The *Mushikavamsakavya*, an eleventh century dynastic chornicle describing the history of the kingdom of Ēḻimalai, praises the settlement in glowing

terms[13]. According to the *Kavya*, Śatasōma, the Mūṣaka king, established the temple of Śiva and Cellūr. This tradition is repeated in other works of late medieval period[14]. According to the genealogy given in the *Mushakavamsa*, Śatasoma was the 87th ruler before Kuñcivarman, the father-in-law of the Cēra king Jayarāga (A.D. 883-913). However, no conclusion can be arrived at on the basis of this evidence. The *Kavya* has given a vivid account of the brahman settlement. Valabha, the Mūṣaka king, (c. 10th century) is said to have visited the *agrahara* of Cellūr, where lived erudite brahmans well-versed in the Vedas and Śāstras and engaged in sacrifies[15]. The poet has used twenty more verses to describe the glory and prosperity of the agrahara[16]. These references suggest the unbroken continuity of the brahman settlement at Cellūr upto and during the eleventh century, A.D.

A couple of inscriptions discovered and deciphered recently by Dr. M.G.S. Narayanan from the adhiṣṭhāna (plinth) of the Tṛccambaram temple at Taliparamba and ascribed to c. 11th century, A.D. speak of another temple in the grāma of Taliparamba[17]. One suggests that the region was under the influence of the Cēra monarchs while the other gives the name of a certain Mānavēpala Mānavīyatan. This name was the hereditary title of the governors of Ēṛānāḍu, who later became the Zamorins of Calicut. Another copper plate record, procured by the Department of History, University of Calicut, throws interesting light on the village council and its functioning[18]. The record speaks of the two *sabhas* of Perumcellūr granting a loan to acertain landowner taking his properties and serfs as mortgage. This is a very significant record as it shows that there were two *sabhas*. They may have been each looking after the affairs of the Taḷiparamba and Tṛccambaram temples. The mention of serfs being mortgaged is also interesting.

Traditional history as embodied in the brahmanincal chronicle states that during the period prior to the establishment of the rule of Perumāḷs at Mahodayapura, Kerala was governed by the brahman oligarchy with representatives from four units of administration called *Kalakams* and that Perumcellūr constituted one of them[19]. Dr M G. S.

Narayanan has suggested that *Kalakam* could be a corrupt from of *Ghataka* or *Ghatika* which has been identified with the *Salai*, the paramilitary organisation of brahmans[20]. If this is true, it may be suggested that there was at Cellūr a ghaṭikā or Śālai. However, there is a statement in the *Keralolpatti* itself that Cellūr contributed 3000 members to the armed militia of brahmans known as Cāttirar or Caṭṭar[21]. It has been shown that Caṭṭar or Cāttirar were the disciples of such *salais* or *ghatikas*[22]. According to the same tradition Cellūr ceased to be one of the *Kalakams* for the reason that it was away from the capital[23] in the period of the Cēra kingdom of Mahōdayapura. It is interesting to enquire whether this was because Kōlattunāḍ, in which Cellūr is located, resisted the Cēra expansion in the first instance[24]. It is significant, however, that *Subhadradhananjayam* and *Tapatisamvaranam*, two popular Sanskrit dramas or the Cēra king-Kulaśēkhara (A.D. 844-883), are not even to this day staged anywhere in the territory of Kolattunāḍ. The reason given by traditional schoiars is that it was not staged first in the temple of Taliparamba according to the convention followed in Kerala.

Local lagends have it that the deity consecrated in the temple of Taliparamba has a Kṣatriya status. For this reason, brahmans do not prostrate on the maṇḍapa of the temple. Uddaṇḍa refers to this in his *Kokilasandesa* (A.D c. 15th century)[25] Other works of almost the same period, like the *Cellurnathodayam* and the *Cellurisavilasam* address the deity as *Maharajahamsam* and *Maharajan*[26]. Tradition explains this by saying that a Zamorin, King of Calicut, who was a devotee of the temple, achieved union with the deity. The temple observes pollution on the death of the eldest member of the Zamorin's family even to this day. The mention of Maānavēpala Manavīyatan in one of the inscriptions from Tṛccambaram may also suggest some kind of relationship between the Zamorin's family and Cellūr.

In the late medieval period, we have many literary works in Sanskrit and Malayalam, praising the glory of Cellūr, The *Cellurnathodayam* is a Maṇipravāḷam 'campu' which gives the mythological story of the consecration of the Śiva temple at Cellūr[27]. The village of Cellūr is praised in glowing terms in the work. The tradition, as old as the

date of the *Mushakavamsa* (11th century), that Śatasōma established the temple at Cellūr, is the nucleus of the theme elaborated in the *campu*. Other works like *Cellurisavilasam* and *Cellurppiranstuti* in Malayalam and *Cellurstotram* in Sanskrit and many single verses sing the glory of this temple[28]. The *Kokilasandesa* of Uddaṇḍa also praises this temple[29]. The word Cellūr, literally rendered as the "Village of Prosperity", is translated into Sanskrit as Sampadgrāma and Lakṣmīgrāma. The prominence with which medieval literature treats the village of Cellūr bears testimony to the continued prosperity of Cellūr in this period also.

On the basis of the above survey, the following conclusion may be drawn :

As early as the age of the Sangam, Cellūr was firmly established as a brahman settlement with strong Vedic culture and sacrificing tradition and also with the Paraśurāma legend. This would link the brahman settlements in Kerala in general, and the one at Cellūr in particular, with the long chain of settlements on the western coast of peninsular India. The process of brahman migration and settlement in Kerala may be suggested to have begun as early as the age of the Sangam. Epigraghic and literary evidences as well as the temple building suggest the continued prosperity of Cellūr through the medieval period also. Since Cellūr happens to be one of the northernmost brahman settlements of Kerala, it may be assumed to have been the point of Kerala's contact with Hindu brahmaical culture, which played a crucial role in the formation of society in Kerala in the centuries to come.

NOTES:-

1. Traditing has it that brahmans settled in Kerala originally in thirty-two villages. See Herman Gundert, ed., *Keralotpatti*, (reprint, Trivandrum, 1961), pp. 5, 27.

2. It is interesting that it was here that the English settlers established their earliest trading centre in Malabar in the year 1669. See Charles Fawcett, *The English Factories in India*, Vol. 1, (New Series, Oxford, 1936), p.288.

3. *Akananuru*, 220. (Translation by the author).

4. For details of the southward expansion of brahman settlers carrying the Paraśurāma tradition, see B.A Saletore, *Ancient Karnataka*, Vol.1, (Poona, 1936), pp. 10ff; M.G.S. Narayanan, 'Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Kulaśēkhara Empire, c.800-1124 A.D.", (Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, University of Kerala, 1972), Introductory.

5. R.S. Panchmukhi in *Twelve Years of Kannada Research*, 1939-'51, (Dharwar, 1951), p. V and Plate III. The author wishes to thank Dr. A. Sundara for providing details about the findspot.

6. *Akananuru*, 90.

7. Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Keralam Ancum Arum Nurrantukalil*, (Kottayam, 1967), p.83.

8. *Akananuru*, 216.

9. *Ibid*, 251, 281. On this basis, the Kōśar may be identified with the Vaṭukar, i.e., Northerners. For a new interpretation, see M.G.S. Narayanan, "The Mauryan Problem in Sangam Works in Historical Perspective", *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. LII, Part II, August 1975.

10. *Kuruntokai*, 73.

11. M.G.S. Narayanan, "History from the Mūṣakavamśakāvya of Atula" *Proceedings of the Silver Jubilee Session of the All India Oriental Conference*, (Calcutta, 1969). See also n.9 above.

12. See R Shamasastri, *Kautilya's Arthasastra*, (Mysore, 1960), pp. 75-76 and notes.

13. *T.A.S.* II, i, p. 109. See also Narayanan, n.11 above.

14. See Vaṭakkumkūr Rājarājavarma Iḷaya Rājā, ed., *Cellurnathodayam Bhasha Campu*, IV, edn., (Trichur, 1969). p.3., v.2.

15. *Mushakavamsakavya*, XIII, vv.51-2.

16. *Ibid*, vv. 53-72.

17. See M.G.S. Narayanan, *Index to Cera Insciptions*, (a companion volume to *Kulasekhara Empire*, *op.cit.*,) Nos.A.61 and C.1.

18. The author wishes to thank Shri. M.R. Raghava Varier for his kind assistance in deciphering this record.

19. Gundert, ed., *op. cit* , pp.7, 15.

20. M. G. S. Narayanan, *Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala*, (Trivandrum, 1973), pp. 21-42.

21. Gundert, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 7

22. Narayanan, n. 20.

23. Gundert, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 26-7.

24. This is suggested by the *Mushakavamsa*. See. Narayanan, n. 11.

25. *Kokilasandesa*, I, v. 50.

26. Vaṭakkumkūr, *op. cit.*, p. 1, v. 1.; Uḷḷūr S. Paramēśvara Aiyar, *Kerala Sahitya Caritram*, (reprint, Trivandrum, 1970), Vol. II, p. 251.

27. Vaṭakkumkūr, ed., *op. cit.*

28. See quotations in Uḷḷūr, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-6; 251 Vaṭakkumkūr, *op. cit.*, pp. XIX, XX.

29. *Kokilasandesa*, I, vv. 49-60.

III

THE ORIGINAL SETTLEMENTS

Several Brahman settlements were founded in Kerala well before the re-establishment of the Cēra kingdom with their new capital at Mahōdayapura. The Brahmans in Kerala are said to have originally settled in thirty-two villages. But they spread, establishing fresh settlements by fusing together elements of established ones and by amalgamating two or more settlements to form a bigger one. In order to study the development of their expansion and growth in Kerala, it is necessary to have an idea of the original settlements.

The thirty-two settlements of tradition, as given in the *Keralolpatti*, are as follows :

a) Between rivers Perumpuḻa and Karumānpuḻa :

1) Payyannūr, 2) Perumcellūr, 3) Ālattūr, 4) Kārantōḷa, 5) Cōkiram, 6) Panniyūr, 7) Karikkāṭu, 8) Īśānamangalam, 9) Tṛśśivapērūr and 10) Peruvanam;

b) Between rivers Karumānpuḻa and Cūrṇi :

11) Cāmuṇḍa, 12) Iruṅgāṭikkūṭal, 13) Āvaṭṭiputtūr, 14) Paṛavūr, 15) Airāṇikkaḷam, 16) Mūḻikkaḷam, 17) Kuḻavūr, 18) Aṭavūr,

19) Ceṅganāṭu, 20) Iḷibhyam, 21) Uḷiyannūr and 22) Kaḻutanāṭu; and c) Between river Cūrṇi and Cape Comorin :

23) Ēṟṟumānūr, 24) Kumāranellūr, 25) Kāṭamaṟuku, 26) Āṟanmuḷa, 27) Tiruvalla, 28) Kiṭaṅgūr, 29) Ceṅgannūr, 30) Kaviyūr, 31) Veṇmaṇi and 32) Nīrmaṇṇa[1].

Out of these thirty-two villages, seventeen have yielded early inscriptions from the precinct of the temples themselves, four figure in inscriptions recovered from other places, there figure in contemporary or near-contemporary literature, seven, which have no literary or epigraphic evidence to support their antiquity, have come down to us with their continuing Brahman tradition and structural temples Only one remains unidentified. Moreover, every Nampūtiri Brahman, to this day, would claim his ancestry to one of the above thirty-two villages, be he the resident of any place. Therefore, it can provisionally be assumed that there is *prima facie* truth in the traditional accounts of the original settlements of Kerala Brahmans as given in the *Keralolpatti*; and we may proceed to take up the identification of the thirty-two settlements.

1) PAYYANNŪR : This is one of the northernmost villages of Kerala and the northernmost of traditional Brahman settlements One peculiarity of the Brahmans of this village is that they follow matriliny, which is absent among other Brahmans in Kerala, perhaps in the whole of India. Tradition has it, as an explanation for this, that the Aryan Brahman settlers of Kerala were requested by Paraśurāma to adopt matriliny for the atonement of his matricidal sin which the members of this village alone complied with[2]. The Brahman residents of this village, however, are regarded to be of a degraded status. The village temple is situated in the Taḷipaṟamba Taluk in the Cannanore district and is dedicated to Subrahmaṇya.

2) PERUMCELLŪR : Perumcellūr, modern Taḷipaṟamba, is in the Cannanore district. The antiquity of this village as an established Brahman settlement with a Paraśurāma tradition and sacrificing background goes back to the *Sangam* Age[3]. Early medieval works like the

Mushakavamsa kavya (eleventh century) and late medieval works like the *Kokilasandesam* (fifteenth century) *Cellurnathōdayam* (16th century) etc. contain several words of praise for the Brahman centre at Cellūr[4]. Three temples are simultaneously regarded as the grāmakṣētras of this village, viz. the Śiva temples at Taḷiparamba and Kāññiraṇgat and the Kṛṣṇa temple at Trccambaram. The Trccambaram temple has yielded two inscriptions from its *adhishthana* (plynth), both of which are ascribed to eleventh century, A D.[5]. Recently, a copper plate record referring to the two *sabhai* of Perumcellūr has been discovered, the orignal of which is kept in the Department of History in Calicut University. The document belongs to the middle of the twelfth century. The *Keralolpatti* relates that Cellūr formed one of the four administrative units during the pre-Mahōdayapura period of Kerala history and that it contributed 3000 to the Brahman para-military organisation of Cāttirar[6].

3) ĀLATTŪR:- Ālattūr is a village situated five miles to the south of Tirur Railway Station. That this was an established Brahman settlement is borne out by a medieval *Manipravalam* poem, *Candrotsavam* (Fifteenth century)[7]. The identification is supported by the structural temple and continuing Brahman tradition.

4) KĀRANTŌḶA:- The village has ceased to be a Brahman settlement now. Sri. A. K. T. K. M. Narayanan Namputiripad, who is not himself very clear about it, has suggested that this village may be the present Tṛppanacci near Manjeri[8]. But some cadjan leaf records examined by the present writer refer to a place now known as Kārathūr as Kārattḷōa[9]. The change from Kārattōḷa to Kārāthūr is linguistically admissible. Kārattōḷa Nampi, a famous aṣṭavaidyan of Kerala can be regarded as a native of this village since we find there a compound called Nambillathe paṛamba (the compound of Nampi's house), although the Nampi family is now extinct. Further, a ruined temple, recently renovated, has yielded a Viṣṇu image which shows characteristic features of Pallavan sculpture. Moreover, many compounds in this village, like the Mūtteḍathe Paṛamba, Eṭamana Illapaṛamba etc. compel us to believe that his village was once peopled by Nampūtiri Brahmans. For

the foregoing reasons, the present writer regards that the present-day Kārathūr constituted one of the thirty-two Brahman settlements of tradition. The Śukapuram village, which in later times proved to be a very prosperous settlement, may have absorbed this, for the Kāathūr temple is now looked after by a Brahman belonging to Śukapuram village.

5) CŌKIRAM : Cōkiram is better known in its Sanskritised form, Śukapuram, and is situated ten miles east of Ponnani the port town. The temple is dedicated to Dakṣiṇāmūrti (Śiva). This temple has yielded four inscriptions of the Cēra period[10]. The *Candrotsavam* refers to certain Brahman students of this village[11]. This has been one of the most prominent settlements of Kerala and figures as witness, together with Panniyūr, in the Vīrarāghava Copper Plates of A.D. 1225[12]. The hostilities between Panniyūr and Śukapuram figure prominantly in medieval literature[13]. There is a tradition that the chief of Vaḷḷuvanāḍ patronised this settlement from very early times[14]. This is endorsed by the occurrence of Irāyacēkara Vaḷḷuvar, chief of Vaḷḷuvanāḍ, in two Śukapuram inscriptions and literature[15].

6) PANNIYŪR : The Varāhamūrti temple at Panniyūr, six miles to the west of Pattambi on the bank of river Pērār in the Ottapalam Taluk, is the grāmakṣētra of Panniyūr settlement, and it has yielded an inscription[61]. The *Candrotsavam* makes mention of this village also[17]. This village formed one of the prominent setilements during early medieval times as demonstrated by the Vīrarāghava Copper Plates[18]. Tradition has it that this village formed one of the four earlier Kaḻakams and that it contributed 4000 to the Brahman para-military organisation of Caṭṭar[19]. The suggestion that the Panniyūr (pig village) faction, supported the Westera Cālūkyas and the Śukapuram (bird village) faction supported the Raṣṭrakūṭas, who were Vaiṣṇavites and Śaivites respectively, has been put forward by Logan[20]. This view is speculative and un-historical as it is too much to project petty quarrels in remote villages against the background of the Cālūkya-Rāṣṭrakūṭa hostilities[21].

7) KARIKKĀṬU : This village is located in the Manjeri Taluk, two miles to the north of Manjeri town. The temple is dedicated to Subrahmaṇya and has yielded five inscriptions[22]. The inscriptions ascribed to the 11th century as well as the temple records of medieval times suggest that this had once been a very prosperous temple with vast properties. There are certain peculiarities in the customs of the Brahmans of this village, especially their women[23].

8) ĪŚĀNAMAṄGALAM : Īśānamaṅgalam has been described in medieval Maṇipravāḷam works as a Brahman settlement[24]. This settlement has now become extinct. The location of this village is disputed. There is a temple bearing this name near Putukkāṭ in the Trichur district But an inscription from Rājādityēśvaram in Tamilnadu speaks of Īśānamangalam to be in Netuṅkāläynāṭu in Kerala[25]. Netuṅkāläynāṭu has been identified as Neṭuṅganāṭu of medieval times which is very near Pattambi[26]. The Tiruvalla Copper Plates also refer jointly to Netuṅkālināṭu and Īśānamaṅgalam[27]. Another inscription from Neṭurupuram Taḷi, near Pattambi also mentions Isānamangalam[28]. Narayanan Namputiripad has his own reasons to suggest that Īśānamaṅgalam is the present Ōṅgallūr near Pattambi[29]. All these together go to suggest that Īśānamaṅgalam was a settlement of Brahmans on the bank of river Pērār near Pattambi.

9) TṚŚŚIVAPERUR : The village temple is centrally located in Trichur muncipal town. This temple has yielded two inscriptions assigned to the 12th century[30]. *Candrotsavam*, the later medieval Maṇipravāḷam work refers to some Brahmans of this village[31]. The temple has three huge *sancta sanctorum* of equal size, dedicated to Śiva, Viṣṇu and Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa; but importance is attached to Siva in the matter of rituals, offerings etc. In later times, this temple has grown famous for the Trichur Pūram, one of the most important festivals of Kerala.

10) PERUVANAM : The Peruvanam temple is praised in the Maṇipravāḷam work, *Candrotsavam*[32]. Six Vaṭṭeḻuttu and Malayalam inscriptions have been noticed from this temple[33]. An eleventh century

inscription from Tiruvaṭūr in North Kerala refers to seven persons originally belonging to this village, along with others, being established there and a new settlement being created[34]. A similar case is registered in the Kiḷimānūr record of A.D. 1169, whereto a Brahman from this village is party[35]. Perumanam also has been a prosperous settlement; and this status is retained even to this day.

11) CĀMUṆḌA : Cāmuṇḍa is the Sanskritised form of the word Cemmaṇṭa, and is a village three miles to the north of Irinjalkkuda. Two inscriptions from the temple, recently discovered by the present writer and deciphered by the epigraphist of Calicut University are palaeographically attributed to A.D. 13th century[36]. The ruins of the outer prākāra, Kūttampalam, Vātilmāṭam etc. also go to prove the antiquity of this temple. The central shrine is richly carved with the conventional saptamālā.

12) IRUṄGĀṬIKKŪṬAL : The word Iruṅgāṭikkūṭal has undergone a change and become Irinjalakuda. This temple was a wealthy one. Two inscriptions datable to A.D. 855 and c. 1000, discovered from the temple, show that the prosperity can be traced back to such early periods[37]. The Tāḻakkād inscription of Rājasimha of the 11th century also makes mention of this village[38]. A Tiruvaṭūr inscription of A.D. 11th century and a Kilimanur record of A.D. 12th century refer to four and one Brahmans respectively hailing from this village[39]. This village constituted one of the later four Kaḻakams of tradition, with its seat in the capital city of Mahōdayapura, at Ciṅgapuram Taḷi[40]. The second part of the name, Kūṭal, has been Sanskritised into Samgama and is mentioned in the *Kokilasandesa* and *Candrotsavam*[41]. Around the word Samgama has been fabricated a legend that a precious stone borrowed from the ruler of Ōḍanāḍ merged with the forehead of the deity and that the temple properties were since hypothecated to the ruler of Ōḍanāḍ. That the temple and the rulers of Ōḍanāḍ had some connections is, however, shown by the temple records dating as back as 1442 A.D[42].

13) ĀVAṬṬIPPUTTŪR: Āvaṭṭipputtūr is now known as Aviṭṭattūr. This temple has yielded four insctiptions out of which one is thoroughly damaged. The rest have been deciphered by Dr. M G.S. Narayanan in 1970 and assigned to A.D. 903[43]. The Tiruvaṭūr lithic epigraph speaks of six Brahmans of five families hailing from this village[44]. The temple is rich in late medieval sculpture. Legends have it that the deity was consecreted by the sage Agastya and they derive the word Avittathur from Agastyaputtur, which, in fact, is based on the Sanskritisation of the sounds.

14) PARAVŪR: Paṛavūr is modern North Parur in the Ernakulam district. The village temple is situated to the north of the town. In an inscription from Cēnnamaṅgalam, a nearby village, Paṛavur is mentioned[45]. The Tiruvaṭūr epigraph speaks of two Brahmians and the Kiḷimānūr record, of one Brahman of this village[46]. A verse in *Kokasandesam*, a medieval Maṇıpravāḷam work, speaks of the "famous Paṛavūr village"[47]. It may also be assumed that the "Paṛaiyūr Kūttaccākkaiyan" may have been a dancer from this village[48]. Tradition has it that Paṛavūr formed one of the four earlier and four later Kaḷakams and that it contributed 5000 members to the armed Brahman militia of Caṭṭar[49]. The seat assigned to Paṛavūr in the capital city, according to the same tradition, was Neṭiyataḷi and this is testified to by a near-contemporary source[50].

15) AIRĀṆIKKAḶAM. Airāṇikkaḷam is situated four miles north west of Mūḻikkaḷam. From the village temple, which enshrines Śiva, has been discovered two inscriptions[51]. So also the Kiḷimānūr record mentions a Brahman from this village[52]. An inscription discovered at Kīḻtaḷi near Koduṅgallūr (Mahōdayapura, the capital city of the Cēras) speaks of this village[53]. This bears testimony to the tradition that this settlement formed one of the four later Kaḷakams with its seat assigned at Kīḻtaḷi[54]. Lakṣmīdāsa, a gifted poet, to whom is attributed the medieval Sanskrit work, *Sukasandesa*, hailed from this village[55].

16) MŪḶIKKAḶAM: This has been one of the most important Brahman settlements of Kerala. This temple is situated six miles to

south of Aṅgamāli Railway station. Two inscriptions of Indu Kōta and Bhāskara Ravi, attributed to A.D. 948 and A.D. 1010 respectively, have been discovered from this temple[56]. The Tirumūḻikkaḷam temple has been praised by Nammāḻvar in Tiruvāymoḻi[57]. *Candrotsavam*, the medieval Maṇipravāḷam work also refers to this village[58]. Besides, one Kūṟṟampaḷḷi Cuvākaran Tāmōtaran, a Brahman from this village figures in the Kiḷimānūr record[59]. This village, together with Iruṅgāṭikkūṭal, Paṟavūr and Airāṇikkaḷam constituted the four Kaḻakams of tradition or the "Nālu Taḷi" of inscriptions with its seat in the capital city at Mēlttaḷi[60]. Moreover, Mūḻikkaḷa Kaccam, incidentally, contained certain rules of conduct regulating temple properties and their management observed all over Kerala[61].

17) KUḶAVŪR : This is the present day Kuḻūr on the Annamanada-Kuntur Road in the Trichur District. There are two undeciphered medieval inscriptions in the courtyard of this temple. These together with continuing Brahman tradition, help the identification of this traditional settlements.

18) AṬAVŪR : Aṭavūr is a place near Korattiangadi Railway Station. Although this has ceased to be a Brahman settlement, legends, the structural temple and the continuing name within the geographical limits prescribed in the *Keralolpatti* help the identification.

19) CEṆṆANĀṬU : Ceṅṅanṭāu, written now as Ceṅṅamanātu but pronounced as Ceṅṅanātu itself, is a village six miles to the South-West of Alwaye. There is an undeciphered Vaṭṭeḻuttu inscription on the left wall of the corridor in front of the temple. The Brahmans of this village are called Grāmaṇi Nampūtiris; and tradition has it that the Brahman army of Caṭṭar was contributed by this village also.

20) IḶIBHYAM : The identification of this village was very much in question till recently. A version of the *Keralolpatti*, recently published, has brought to light an alternative name, viz. Muppattumūvarkkaḷam[62]. This can, with no hesitation, be identified with the present day Tirumupattu temple near Alwaye. A verse in *Kokasandesa*

makes reference to this temple[63]. Another verse in the *Sukasandesa* also seems to refer to this temple[64]. These verses help us give the etymology of the name "Muppattumūvarkkaḷam". In Malayalam, "Kaḷam" means a settlement and "Muppattumūvar" means thirty-three persons. It is possible that this village originally formed a settlement of thirty-three Brahmans hailing from the Airāṇikkaḷam village, for the *Keralolpatti* mentioned above has it that Iḷibhyam is subsidiary to Airāṇikkaḷam[65]. It is interesting also that the Brahmans now living in this village claim that they originally belonged to the Airāṇikkaḷam village.

21) UḶIYANNŪR : Uḷiyannūr is a village two miles to the south-west of Alwaye. The temple is dedicated to Siva and has yielded an inscription[66]. The temple was till recently ruled by a body of ten Brahman families, but has since come under the management of Iriñjālakuṭa Devasvam.

22) KAḶUTANĀṬU : Nothing definite can be said about this village; tentative suggestions identifying it with Vētanāḍ or Kīḻmāḍ may be made; but these are not supported by evidence.

23) ĒṚṚUMĀNŪR : Ēṛṛumānūr is a village which attained prosperity during the medieval times. The medieval Maṇipravāḷam work, *Unnunilisandesam* has praised Ēṛṛumānūr temple[67]. This temple is situated six miles to the North of Kottayam, and is dedicated to Śiva.

24) KUMĀRANALLŪR : Situated four miles to the north of Kottayam, Kumāranallūr is famous for the Durgā temple, which is the grāmakṣētra also. This temple has yielded an inscription assigned to c. 11th century, A.D[68]. Local traditions indicate that this was a Śiva temple, later converted to Durga temple.

25) KIṬAṄGŪR : Kiṭaṅgūr is a village near Pālai in the Iḍikki district. Though the village temple, which enshrines Śiva, has not yielded any inscriptions, on account of the continuing orthodox Brahman traditions built around the structural temple, we may identify this

village also to be a seat of one of the original brahman settlements. The temple enshrines Śiva.

26) KĀṬAMAṚUKU : Kāṭamaṛuku is now known as Kāṭamuṛi and is a village near Kottayam. There is a brahman family bearing the name Kāṭamaṛuku near Thodupuzha. Their ancestors may, perhaps, have migrated from this village.

27) TIRUVALLA : Tiruvalla is sixteen miles to the South of Kottayam. The temple has yielded the lengthiest of Kerala inscriptions[69]. The temple is dedicated to Viṣṇu and is praised by Tamil saints like Nammāḻvār and Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār[70]. Two brahmans from this village figure in the Kiḷimānūr record[71].

28) ĀṚANMUḶA : Āṛanmuḷa is situated ten miles to the east of Tiruvalla. A Brahman from this village is referred to in the Kiḷimānūr Record of A.D. 1169[72]. The temple, dedicated to Viṣṇu, has been praised by Nammāḻvar in *Tiruvaymoli*[73]. The temple is now famous for the boat race.

29) CEṄGANNŪR : Ceṅgannūr is four miles to the South of Tiruvalla. The temple is dedicated to Śiva. The two sets of Māmpaḷḷi Plates, dated A.D. 973, speak of Tirucceṅgunṛūr[74]. The Kiḷimānūr record of 1169 A.D., refers to two Brahmans of this village also[75]. Tradition has it that Tamilians came in and peopled Cengannūr and that in course of time they fell out with the Brahmans of Ceṅgannūr[76].

30) KAVIYŪR : Kaviyūr is famous for one of the few rock-cut temples of Kerala. The grāmakṣētra, situated four miles east of Tiruvalla, has yielded two inscriptions[77]. The hostilities between Kaviyūr and Āṛanmuḷa are notorious in the later times, although it was by no means comparable to that between Panniyūr and Śukapuram.

31) VEṆMAṆI : Veṇmaṇi is situated two miles west of Pandalam, a town on the Main Central Road. The Viṣṇu temple at Veṇmaṇi and the continuing orthodox Brahman culture help the identification of this village settlement.

32) NĪRMAṆṆA : Written variously as Nīramaṇ, Nīrmaṇṇa etc., in different versions of the *Keralolpatti*, the present name of this village is Niṛamaṇkara. Dr. Stella Kramrisch has given the photographs of a ruined temple and Viṣṇu image of c. 14th century enshrined therein[78]. This village has ceased to be a Brahman settlement in the present times.

The above survey, when made against the background of the geographical setting of these settlements, would reveal two things. It was on the fertile plains on the valleys of rivers that the settlements took shape. Another and more important fact is that some settlements are found in clusters. For instance, the group consisting of Ēṛṛumānūr, Kumāranellūr, Kāṭamuṛi, Āṛanmuḷa, Tiruvalla, Ceṅgannūr, Kaviyūr, Veṇmaṇi and Niṛamaṇkara form a cluster on the Pampā valley. Another comprising Cemmaṇḍa, Iriñālakkuda, Aviṭṭattur, Paṛavūr, Airāṇikkaḷam, Muḻikkaḷam, Kuḻūr, Aṭūr, Ceṅganāṭu, Tirumuppattu and Kaḻutanāṭu make a second one on the greater Periyār. The settlements on the banks of Pērār, viz. Kārattūr, Ālattūr, Cōkiram, Panniyūr and possibly Iśānamaṅgalam constitute a different cluster. This fact, that the settlements are generally found on river valleys and more particularly that they are populously found in the more fertile regions, together with the inscriptions which record land-grants and which emerge by the revival of the Cēras in Kerala, indicates and perhaps accounts for the rapid increase in agricultural production.

Although the above thirty-two settlements form the original ones of tradition there took shape others as well. The neighbourhood of all the temples of the ancient and medieval periods served as Brahman settlements. This is clear from the fact that almost all the temple inscriptions of this age are of similar character.

About the constitution or pattern of constitution of these settlements we are utterly in the dark. But later records of the 11th and 12th century A.D. typify certain cases which can have been the pattern in the immediate past also. One such incident is recorded in the Kollūr Madham plates dated 1189 A.D. It claims to be a renewal of an old

charter, alleged to have been issued by the mother of Śrīvallavan Kōtai (who ruled Vēṇād during the latter half of 10th century A D). Provision is made therein for temple expenses and the maintenance of a Brahman settlement around the temple which can be assumed to have been constituted by twenty-three families[79]. Another lithic epigraph of c. 1020 A D, from Tiruvaṭūr speaks of the creation and endowment of a fresh Brahman settlement where twenty-four Brahmans from five different older Brahman settlements are established with hereditary rights[80]. Vaikkam occur as an established Brahman settlement in this inscription around the Vaikkam temple, about which the *Keralolpatti* or other legends are silent. Similarly, a Kiḷimānūr record of 1169 A.D speaks of ten different Brahmans from eight different villages being settled around the newly consecrated Tiruppālkkaḍal temple[81]. An Airāṇikkalam inscription, on the other hand, registers the amalgamation of two gramas viz. the Tiruvallavāḻ village and the Airāṇikkaḷam village to form an "ēkagrama" or single village[82].

We have now the list of the thirty-two original settlements of tradition[83]. This list is completed by the picture of the process of the expansion of the Brahman colonies in this land, as described above. They created fresh settlements recruiting organs from earlier ones. Sometimes two settlements were merged together to form a bigger one. These processes of expansion by means of convergence and divergence can be believed to have gone on, until perhaps the whole of the arable lands of Kerala became their property and thereby their mastery over the land was asserted even to the extent of claiming the right over the land as a gift of Paraśurāma.

NOTES :

1. Herman Gundert, ed, *Keralolpatti*, (Trivandrum, reprint, 1961), pp. 5, 27.

2. *Ibid*, pp. 10, 11.

3. See *supra*, "Cellūr - An Early Settlement".

4. *Mushakavamsakavya*, XIII, vv 51-52, see extracts published in *TAS* II, I : Uddaṇḍa's *Kokilasandesa*, vv 49-60, See K. Achyuta Menon et. al., ed, *Rantu Sandesangal* (Trichur, 1900) pp 22.27; and Nīlakaṇṭha's *Cellurnathodayam*, See Vatakkumkur Rajaraja Varma Ilaya Raja, ed. *Cellurnathodayam Bhasa Campu* Fourth edn: (Trichur 1069).

5. M.G.S. Narayanan, *Index to Cera Inscriptions* (a companion volume to Ph. D. Dissertation, unpublished, University of Kerala, 1972), Nos. A 61 and c 1.

6. *Keralolpatti*, pp 15, 27.

7. Elamkulam, P.N. Kunhan Pillai, ed, *Candrotsavam*, 2nd Edn. (Kottayam, 1969) p. 158, v. 28.

8. A.K.T.K.M. Valiya Narayanan Namputiripad, in Parayil Raman Namputiri. ed, *Namputirimar*, (Trichur, 1918) p. 55.

9. Veluthat Mana records, Kept at the Department of History, University of Calicut

10. *Index* C - 17 to 20.

11. Elamkulam, ed, *Candrotsavam*, p. 157, v. 25

12. *EI*, IV, pp 290-97.

13. For the growth of these hostilities as reflected in medieval literature, below, "New Developments".

14. See "Visschers letters from Malabar" edited in K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala* (Ernakulam, 1924) Letter No. VIII, pp 36-39 and the editor's notes in *Ibid*, pp 419 ff.

15. *Index*, c. 18; c. 20. For the literary evidence, see Suranad, ed, *Unnicciru tevicaritam*, p. 23.

16. *Index*, C. 16

17. Elamkulam, ed, *Candrotsavam*, v. 37, p. 160

18. See Note No. 12 above.

19. See Note No. 6, above.

20. Logan, *Malabar*, Vol. I, p. 275

21. See also K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *op. cit*, Vol. I p. 56

22. *Index*, C. 7 to 11

23. A. K. T. K. M. Narayanan Namputiripad *op. cit*, p. 54

24. Elamkulam, ed, *Candrotsavam*, p. 159, v. 31.

25. No. 329 of 1902; *SII* VII, No. 958. p. 467: "Malaiyāḷan Neṭumkālāynāṭṭu Iyānamaṅgalattu Mānavallan Kaṇṇan"

26. M. G. S. Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*, *op. cit*, pp. 278-9

27. *Index*, No A. 80, 11. 484-5

28. *Index*, A. 9

29. See A. K. T. K. M. Narayanan Namputiripad, *op cit*, pp. 53-54.

30. *TAS*, VI, p. 194

31. Elamkulam, ed, *Candrotsavam*, p. 159, V. 32.

32. Elamkulam, ed, *Candrotsavam*, p. 159, v. 35, Uddaṇḍa, *Kokilasandesa*, vv. 82, in K. Achyuta Menon, et. al, ed. *op. cit*, pp. 40.41

33. *ARADC* for 1924-25, Nos. 69-74 p. 24

34. *Index* No. B. 16, 11 10-12

35. *TAS*, V, I, pp 63-85, 1.5

36. See eye copies and estampages kept at the Department of History, University of Calicut and also, M. R. Raghava Varier "Fragmentary Inscription of Chemmanda and History and Geography of a Brahman Settlement" (Unpublished paper, 1974).

37. *Index* Nos. A. 3 to A. 74

38. *Index* No. A. 54

39. *Index* No. B. 16, 11. 8-10; *TAS*, V, I, pp 63-85, 1.5.

40. *Keralolpatti*, p. 27

41. See *Kokilasandesa*, V. 85, p 43; *Candrotsavam* v. 26, p. 157

42. See K. Rama Pisharoti, "Temple studies", *RVRIB*, No. 2 1933 May, pp 45 ff.

43. *Index* Nos. 10-12

44. *Index* No. B. 16, 11 4-7

45. *Index* No. C. 34

46. *Index* No. B. 16, 11 3-4

47. *Kokasandesa*, v. 84:

"Vīranmārām nēṭiyataḷiyilccērannaviprēśvaranmār
Ōrō pāṭum maruvi mahitam mikka nārīnarāḍhyam
Pārēḻinnum maṇimakuṭaval pōnnucennaṇṇu mōkka-
Ccīrēṛum colluṭaya Paṛavūr grāmamaṅṅētu pinnē"

48. *Cilappatikaram*, XXVIII, 76

49. See Note No. 6 above

50. See Note No. 47 above; see also *Index* No. A. 68

51. *Index* No. C. 35. 36

52. *TAS* V, I, pp 63-85, 11 4-5

53. *Index* No. C. c. 33

54. For the tradition, see *Keralolpatti*, p. 26

55. See T. K. Krishna Menon, *op. cit.*

56. *Index* Nos. A. 23 and A. 37

57. Nammāḻvār, *Tiruvaymoli*, IX, 7 See M. Raghavaiyangar, ed, *Ceraventar Ceyyutkovai*, (Trivandrum, 1951) II. pp 266-272.

58. *Candrotsavam*, v 36, p. 160

59. *TAS*, V I, pp 63-85, 14

60. For the tradition, see *Keralolpatti*, p. 26. For epigraphic evidence see Index Nos. A. 68 and A. 71.

61. For details, see Elamkulam. *Jenmisampradayam Keralathil* pp 30-40;
M. G. S. Narayanan, *Kulasekara Empire*, pp 325-9

62. *Kokasandesa*, v 90.

"Vairam pēṛum matananoṭiṭeññantarā tōṛṛupinnē
Nērē pātittiruvuṭal koṭuttadrirājātmajāyah
Kūṛillāyvān maṛupakutiyilppinne muppattumūnṛāy
Kkūṛiṭṭampum tripuraharanettatra nī kaṇṭu pōka"

64. *Sukasandesa*, Purvasandesea,
"Tacca kṣētram pathi paśupatēryatraca dvādaśadvā-
Vaṣṭāvēkādaśa ca nivasantyasta kampā nilimpāh
Sā cādūre pravahati saritsōdarī tāmpaparṇyā-
ścūrṇī māhōdayapura vadhūrōja cūrṇīkṛormī"

65. Velayudhan Panikkasseei, ed, *op. cit*, p. 59.

66. *Index* No c. 37.

67. Elamkulam P. N, Kunjan Pillai, ed, *Unnunilisandesam*, II edc; (Kottayam 1954) p. 149, v. 132.

68. *Index* No. C. 43

69. *Index* No. A. 80
For details regarding the village settlement of Tiruvalla, see infra, chapter on "Tiruvalla settlement - a case study".

70. Nammāḻvār, *Tiruvaymoli*, V, 9,
Tirumaṅgai, *Periya Tirumoli*, IX, 7;
See M. Raghavaiyangar, *Op. cit*. pp. 238-248.

71. *TAS*, V, I pp 63-85 1.6.

72. *Ibid*, 1.7

73. Nammalvar, *Tiruvaymoli*, VII, 10 See M. R. Iyangar, *Op. cit*, pp. 254-9

74. *Index* No. B. 11, 12

75. Note No 71 above, 11.5-6

76. *Keralolputti*, p. 16

77. *Index* Nos. B. 5, 6

78. Stella Kramrisch, *Dravida, and Kerala in the Art of Travancore*, (Acsona, 1953), pls. 5, 26

79. *Index*, No. B. 15

80. *Index*, No. B. 16

81. *TAS*, V. I., pp. 63$\frac{3}{4}$85

82. *Index*, No.

83. See Appendix I below

THE TIRUVALLA SETTLEMENT - A CASE STUDY

IV

The early Brahman settlements developed rapidly, and the Brahmans expanded all over Kerala, in such a way that by the 10th or 11th century, A. D, they could claim ownership over a large part of the arable lands of Kerala as well as a dominant role in social and politicat institutions. The village community itself, in fact, was reoriented - tha-is, a temple-centred, semi-autonomous, agrarian, caste society supplanted the semi-tribal social structure of Kerala. This process of Aryanisation, which began by the establishment of the Aryan Brahman settlements in Kerala, provides a clue to the understanding of social and cultural developments in Kerala through the ages.

There are, however, certain difficulties in studying this problem. The charters recording the endowment of the original settlements have not come down to us. But the various inscriptions discovered from different places show that the pattern of settlement and development in all the villages was similar, if not identical. Each temple worked as a Brahman centre and also as the pivot round which the village community revolved. Each observed the same rules of conduct regarding the organisation and administration of the village properties and allied

matters. Therefore, any village settlement can be taken as a typical case of the system and the detailed study of one particular settlement would give an idea of the process that was at work in Kerala.

Fortunately for the student, such a study of the various aspects of at least one settlement is possible in the case of the Tiruvālla settlement, thanks to the lengthy Tiruvalla Copper Plates[1]. Tiruvalla forms one of the important Brahman settlements which were established about the time of revival of the Ceras with Mahodayapura as their new capital. According to tradition, it is one of the thirty-two original settlements of the Brahmans in Kerala[2]. The document, recovered from the temple, is a set of copper plates numbering forty-three. Some plates have been lost[3]. The surviving portion itself, however, runs into 630 lines, each line containing an average of 35 letters. It is a series of inscriptions, rather than a single one, editing and codifying endowments and decisions made from time to time. The dates of some of the important events recorded in the inscription can be known from the dates of the donors like Vīra Cōḻa and Kiḻān Aṭikaḷ, Manukulādiyya etc, whose dates are known and also from some stray astronomical data, although the exact date of the execution of the document is not clear. It can not however, be far removed from 12th century[4].

Apart from the above set of copper plates, we have the Vāḻappaḷḷi Copper Plate of Rājaśēkhara (A. D. c. 830) and the Tiruvāṟṟuvāy Copper Plate of Sthāṇu Ravi (A. D. 861), both pertaining to two upagrāmas of the settlement, which show that by the middle of the ninth century this village was so prosperous and well-established as to have subsidiary settlements[5]. Besides, the fame of this temple had reached even beyond the western Ghats, for Nammāḻvār in *Tiruvaymoli* and Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār in *Periya Tirumoli* have praised this temple[6]. The Tirupparappu Copper Plates assignable to the latter half of the ninth century speak of a Talamanai Nāgaśarman of Tiruvallavāḻ as the receipient of certain land grants[7]. The continuing Brahman traditions and family names, and their relations with families in Tiruvalla, show that as early as the ninth century Tirupparappu in South Travancore,

at present in Tamilnadu, was a Brahman settlement subsidiary to Tiruvalla[8]. All these together would go to prove that at least by the close of the eighth century A. D. Tiruvalla had become a Brahman settlement, well established and prosperous enough to have upagrāmas not only in Vāḻappaḷḷi and Tiruvāṟṟuvāy but also in places like Tiruparappu in the far south, and to be famous even outside Kerala, by the ninth and tenth century.

The Brahman settlement of this village also, in conformity with the general pattern found elsewhere in India, was promoted by grants of land. This can be made clear from the extent of land possessed by the temple as evidenced by the Tiruvalla Copper Plates. The wealth of Tiruvalla temple accumulated gradually. We find from the plates that the temple received donations as early as the date of Vīra Cōḻa (907-955 A. D), and as late as the date of Manukulāditya (A. D. 962-1021) It is possible that much property was acquired even before and after these dates.

The donations which the temple received from to time, which caused its development, were in different forms and for different purposes. It is very interesting that apart from the donations made by local people and governors of near-by districts those by persons far away from the village also constituted a major portion of the temple properties. The following is a representative list of donors from distant places :

Name	Nature of donation	No. of line in the the inscription
Vīra Cōḻa	Tiruviḷakku	99-100
KiḻāmAṭikaḷ	,,	109-111
Irāmavaṭuka Mūvar (Kōlattunāḍ)	,,	140-141

Ēṛan Caṅkaran (Puṛakiḻānāḍ)	Tiruviḷakku	150-151
Vāṇiyan from Īḻam (a merchant from Ceylon)	Tiruvamirtu	250-4
Rāman Kōtavarmaṅ (Munninatu)	Oil expenses	532-537
Rāman Mātēvi	Tiruvamirtu	537-542
Muññimārāyar	,,	542-4

The above list is, by no means. complete and exhaustive; still it gives an idea of the importance of a grāmakṣētra at that time in Kerala, irrespective of the fact whether it lay near or far away from the donor.

An important section of the temple properties comprised land. Thus we have 12634 Kalam[9] seed capacity of paddy fields and some garden lands, the income from which was used for feeding Brahmans in the temple. The lands set apart for the purpose of burning perpetual lamps in the temple amounted to an extent of not less than 2000 and odd kalam seed capacity of paddy fields. The Tēviyarnaṭai possessed 5600 kalam seed capacity of paddy fields. Thetemple used to get 13685 paṛai of paddy for daily lamps, 13500 paṛai for daily food offering to the deity, 1237½ parai for purchasing *ghee* to the temple, etc. Apart from the above list, which forms only part of a vast area of landed property owned by the temple, lay lands, the income from which was utilised for the conduct of festivals, ceremonies etc. in the temple, for special offerings like "akkāraṭalai" and 'breakfast'[10] to the deity, for the maintenance of the school and hospital attached to the temple, for the emolumen's paid in gold and in rice and paddy to the many temple functionaries or *Virutti* lands trusted as service tenure to them. The properties belonging to the minor temples attached to the temple itself or upagrāmas are not included in this list. [11]

The temple received wealth in gold also from several sources. The rent from certain lands was payable in gold [12]. The defaulters of certain duties and payments were liable for punishment in the form of fine payable in gold. This was in addition to many donations of gold in the form of bullion, ornaments and vessels. The gold deposit of the temple increased with the addition of the interest on loans granted by the temple [13]. That the temple granted loans shows that it served as a banking institution, exerting its influence on the economic life of people in this way also.

The temple got revenue from certain other sources. The royal dues which formed both Vāḻkkai and Irai from certain villages were made over to the temple [14] Another instance records the assignment of a whole village, Kuṭāvur, along with the right to exact the eighteen kinds of taxes and the market duties together to the temple by Iravi Cirikaṇṭan, Governor of Veṇpolināṭu [15].

The wealth thus acquired by the temple was set a part for different purposes. These included expenses for daily pūjās. It is dear from the record that there were five pūjās a day. It is significant that this practice continues even to this day. Apart from these pūjās there were the ritual bathing of the deity (nīrāṭṭupalli-abhiṣēka) and the ritual procession round the inner prākāra (ciripali-śrībali). Property was ear-marked to meet the expenses of these. A typical instance can be seen in the second (pantīraṭi) pūja of the temple. It was to be conducted with Nivēdya of 12 nāḻi rice. One lamp was to be burnt with ¼ nārāyam of *ghee*. 3 Kaḻaiñcu of of sandalwood was to be used for making paste and one Kāṇam for burning incense. One garland each was to be offered to the deitics consecrated in the eastern and western sides of the main *sanctum sanctorum*.

Apart from the daily expenses there were fortnightly expenses like those for the conduct of the Dvādaśi festival[16]. Similarly certain special offerings were made and dances performed on every 28th day on the asterism of Rōhaṇī for which certain properties were set apart. Such

offerings like those on the asterisms of Ardrā, Uttarāṣadha, the birthday of several chieftains etc., are also recorded.

There were also important yearly festivals like the 'seven days temple festival'. Although the portion describing this festival seems to be missing, it is clear from the mention of certain lands set apart for the purpose[17] that the festival was celebrated. A detailed schedule of the conduct of the festivities during the Āvaṇi Ōṇam (the asterism of Sravaṇa in the month of Śrāvaṇa) is given in the inscription[18]. This portion is very interesting in several respects.

230 paṟai seed capacity of paddy fields were set apart for the conduct of the festival. A total of 405 paṟai of rice was to be spent on that day. Special lamps and incense were to be burnt on that day and deity was to be decked with special garlands. 700 nāḻi rice was to be offered to the eastern and western deities on that day, half of which was for feeding Cattirar. Sub-deities like Varāhappan, Kuravaran, Tiru-vāyampāṭiappan, Ayyappan, Māyiyakki etc. were to be given special food offerings on that day. Then follows a detailed list of what each of the temple functionaries and dependants was to be given. It can be tabulated as follows :

No.	Designation	Payment
1	2 Mēl Emperumakkaḷ (2 chief priests)	20 Nāḻi of rice
2	5 Kīḻ śānti (5 subordinates)	50 ,, ,,
3	Bhaṭṭar (Vedic Professors)	4 ,, ,,
4	Ayyappan Emperumān (Priest of Ayyappan)	4 ,, ,,

5	Kīḻ samañjitan (subordinate accountant)	4	Nāḻi of rice	
6	5 Panṭārakaḷ (5 treasury guards)	20	,,	,,
7	Ilayiṭumavan (supplier of plantation leaves)	4	,,	,,
8	Vāyirkkal Niḷkkumavan (Watchman)	4	,,	,,
9	33 Koṭṭumavaraḷ and Viḷikkumavaraḷ (33 drummers and blowers of pipes)	99	,,	,,
10	4 Akkattaṭikkumavar (4 inside sweepers)	8	,,	,,
11	Viṛakiṭumavan (supplier of firewood)	20	,,	,,
12	Kalavāṇiyan (Potter)	5	,,	,,
13	Anṛaiccelavu Vāyikkumavan (accountant for the day)	5	,,	,,
14	4 Tiruppaḷḷittāmam Keṭṭumavar (4 garland makers)	8	,,	,,
15	Puṛattaṭikkumavar (outside sweepers)	8	,,	,,
16	Vātirppuṛam aṭikkumavar (sweepers outside the outer pakara)	4	,,	,,
17	Matilakattu vakkaṇiccirikkum paṭṭakaḷ ororuttar (each of the vedic professors who participate in scholarly discourses).	15		,,
18	Kaiviḷakkum Tiruvaṭaikkā amirtum Kotukkumavan (the lamp attender and the supplier of arecanuts)	3	,,	,,

19	4 Tēvaṭiccikaḷ (4 Devadasis)	12 Nāḻi of rice
20	Koṭṭumavaraḷ (Drummers)	36 ,, of paddy

The above section in the inscription will reveal the relative status that the temple functionaries enjoyed in society. A study of the conduct of Ōṇam festival in this temple would clearly show how important a temple festival was in the society by the time. It would suffice to say that the Ōṇam festival is only a representative case and that there were other festivals like the Viṣu and the 'seven days' temple festival.

The temple functionaries were paid emoluments both in gold and rice and also in the form of lands under service tenure. The former is called *Jivitam* and the latter, *Virutti* (Sanskrit-vṛtti) both meaning livelihood. Thus we come across "Ayyappanu paṇikku cīvitam", "Nīrāṭṭupaḷḷikku koṭṭikaḷkku cīvitam", "Pārāyaṇavirutti", "Kāval-virutti", "Cāntiviruti" etc. in the inscription [19]. The latter involved the concerned officcial entrusted with lands, the income from which could be enjoyed as a remuneration for the services rendered by him to the temple. This tenure was hereditary. In fact, this was both the cause and effect of occupations becoming more and more hereditary and thereby marked the beginnings both of feudalism and rigidity of sub-castes in India.

It is known from the inscription that a Sālai was attached to the temple[20]. The surviving portion of the inscription speaks of endowments of land not less than 750 kalam seed capacity [21]. This was in addition to the daily meals and special meals of festive occasions with which the Cāttirar (inmates of the śālai) were fed. From a rough calculation worked out on the basis of the rice supplied to the Cāttirar on the Ōṇam day, it can be seen that there were at least 175 Cāttirar in the Tiruvalla Sālai [22]. The significance of this institution can be realised

only against the background of the political importance it had during those days.

We gather from the inscription that the temple sponsored a hospital also [23]. We are completely in the dark regarding the constitution and functioning of this instiution. But it is very important to note that the temple oriented Brahman settlement also cared for the day-to-day requirements of the community around the temple.

The administration of this settlement also was not different, even in details, from the general pattern followed in other contemporary Brahman settlements in Kerala [24]. Accordingly, here also we come across the Ūrāḷar meeting in the temple and unanimously making various decisions. The offices generally found in other village settlements, viz. Potuvāḷ, Vāryan, Samañjitan, etc. are present here also. Similarly in the document we meet with other functionaries like the Cānti Aṭikaḷ, Kīḻccānti, Uvaccakaḷ or Koṭṭikaḷ, Tiruvaṭimār, Paṇṭarakaḷ, Cāttirar, Paṭṭakaḷ, Tēvaṭiccikaḷ etc. in the temple in conformity with the usual pattern followed in a typical temple of this period. Several Kaṇams (Sanskrit-Gaṇa) were instituted in this case also as it was in other settlements for the discharge of certain specific duties. Thus we find in the inscription the Tirunāḷkkaṇam, Tiruvātirakkaṇam, Tiruttu-vātayikkaṇam, Uttirāṭakaṇam etc. each constituted for the conduct of the festival after which it is named, looking after the properties ear-marked for the purpose. Therefore, it can be seen that a careful study of the pattern of the administration of the Tiruvalla settlement, as revealed from the inscription, against the background of the known evidences of the period. points to an understanding of the general pattern of administration in the Aryan Brahman settlements of Kerala.

The above attempt reveals the process by which a typical Aryan Brahman settlement of ancient Kerala developed during the period under review. At first, a small colony of ten or twenty families was established with a village temple as the centre. Gradually more and more subordi-nate deities were consecrated in the temple. Festivals in relation to the

temple also increased. Both these meant more and more temple dependants. These entailed more and more donations to the temple for the payments to the dependants and other expenses. For the administration of the increased festivals etc. new sub committees were constituted in addition to the original governing body of the Ūrāḷar. Other small temples, subsidiary to the Grāmakṣētra like the Tiruvāyampāṭi temple or the Ātanturutti temple were also incorporated in the system. Upagrāmas like Tiruvāṟṟuvāy and Periṅgara within the saṅkēta and Vāḻappaḷḷi and Mānnār (Mannamangalam of the inscription) outside the saṅkēta of the Grāma or settlement came to be established as the settlement expanded [25]. This expansion brought, about a complexity in the nature of the settlement in all respects. The temple, which was originally meant as a centre of worship, became the centre of many social activities. Arts and literatur were encouraged in the from of sculpture, wall-painting Devadāsi dance, Kūttu etc. Education was promoted through the organisat'on of the Sālai. Even public utility services like hospitals and banking were attended to by the temple. This extension in space and range of social activities resulted in the growing strength of the settlement in political and economic fields. We have seen that villages were assigned to the owners of the settlement to protect them from "the wrath of kings and feudatories" [26]. Thus, in the political sphere we find the settlement assuming wider and wider powers. This explains the increased influence that the Brahmans exerted in the political and economic history of Kerala.

In the end, we find that the growth in all these dimensions which began from an economic base culminated in economic domination. The colonisers became masters of the land in every sense of the term. They were enabled to manipulate each institution of society in such a manner as to make it conducive to their safe exitence and further prosperity. This is the real beginning of the process of "Aryanisation", which moulded Indian Polity and society for many centuries by providing it with a frame work of feudal land tenure, social stratification, belief, customs, manners and culture.

NOTES :

1. *Index* No. A 80, See text and commentaries published by T. A. Gopinatha Rao, in *TAS*, II, III, pp 131-207.

2. See *supra*, Chapter on "Original Settlements".

3. Plate Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7, 16, 32 and 41 and possibly some more at the end are missing.

4. For a disscussion of the date of the document, see M. G. S. Narayanan, *Index* No. A. 80.

5. *Index* Nos. A. 1 and A. 4 See also, V. R. Nambiyar, op. cit, and also notes by T. K. Joseph.

6. Nammalvar, *Tiruvaymoli*, 5, 9;
   Tirumangai, *Periya Tirumoli*, 9, 7
   See M. Raghavaiyangar, ed, *ap. cit*; pp 238-248

7. *TAS* I, XIII, pp 197-200, last plate IInd side, 1.4.

8. For details of the families in Tirupparappu and their relation with Tiruvalla, see judgement in O. S. No. 160/70 on the file of the Subordinate Court, Padmanabhapuram. "Annals and Autiquities of Tiruvallā", *Kerala Society Papers*, II, pp 57-94.

9. A measure. For an idea of the weights and measures used during this period, see M. G. S. Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*, pp 478-488.

10. "Tiruppallikkuruppunarnnavare Tiruvamirtu" *Index*, No. A. 80, 11. 438-39.

11. *Ibid*, 1.527.

12. Ibid, 11. 459-473.

See also Elamkulam, *Janmisampradayam Keralattil*, pp 14-16, 17-19.

13. *Index* No. A. 80, 1. 443.

14. Ibid, 11, 240, 241, 243, 252, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 316, etc. For a study of the various taxes, see M. G. S. Narayanan *Kulasekhara Empire* pp 366-396.

15. Index No. A. 80, 11 329-342. It is specifically stipulated that this village was to be protected against the wrath of "Kings and feudatories".

16. Every twelfth day after full moon and new moon. Although the expenses for this are not mentioned in the surviving portion of the inscription, the mention of a particular committee evidently constituted for the conduct of this festival, viz: Tiruthuvatayikkanam, testifies to this fact. See *Ibid*, 1. 361, It is also interesting that this ceremony continues even to this day in the form of feeding a Brahman on every 'Dvadasi day' in the 'Dvadasi madham' attached to the temple.

17. *Ibid*, 1. 468.

18. *Ibid*, 11. 403-438.

19. *Ibid*, 11. 88, 276, 307, 352-56, 551, 616, 619 etc.

20. For a study of this institution, see M. G. S. Narayanan *Aspects of Aryanisation in Kerala* pp 20-42.

21. *Index* No. A. 80 11. 494-517.

22. 350 naḷis of rice were spent for this purpose. The usual allowance for one person being 2 naḷis, as seen from all other contemporary South Indian records, this number can be worked out. See *Ibid*, 11. 409-10.

23. *Ibid*, 11. 411.

24. For a study of this aspect of the problem, see M. G. S. Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*, pp 306-344.

25. See eye copy of a Peringara inscription prepared by the present writer kept at the Department of History, University of Calicut. See also V. R. Nambiar, *op. cit.*

26. See Note No. 15 above.

ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE LATER CERA PERRIOD - A. D. c. 800 - 1100

V

Much work had not been done on the political and social history of Kerala till recently, when in the latter half of the present century Prof. Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai[1] and Dr. M. G. S. Narayanan[2] attempted scientifically at, and succeeded to a large extent in, preparing the essential ground-work of the early history of Kerala. The latter has brought out the significance of the Brahman settlements in ancient Kerala which acting as an agency through which the upper caste Brahmanical customs Kerala, and manners diffused into the economy, society and polity of influenced her cultural pattern in the years to come. The present writer has located and dated the thirty-two "original Aryan Brahman settlements"[3] of ancient Kerala. It has also been shown, by way of a case study, how a typical Braham settlement grew both in space and in the range of socio-economic activities[4]. The political authority of the Brahmans and their representatives at the centre, constituting the King's council called the *Nalu Tali,* has also been studied in detail[5]. All these made them an indispensable element of society and it is only against this background that an intelligible study of the society and culture of Kerala in its formative period could be made. The present attempt is, therefore, to bring together and examine, in perspective, all the avail-

able evidences from primary sources regarding the community organisation and village administration in these Brahman settlements which served as one of the most vital local groups under the later Cēra kingdom of Mahodayapuram.

A large number of Kerala inscriptions from the ninth century onwards record transactions of the temple-centred Brahman settlements. The charters registering the endowment of the "original settlements" are not available. It is possible that those records, which must have been executed on perishable materials like palm-leaves do not survive. However, we know from later inscriptions that these and other similar Brahman settlements, which developed apart from the original thirty-two of tradition, possessed land in large extent by the period under review. This may be taken as an index to the fact that their endowments were made earlier than the earliest surviving document. In the absence of the original charters, one has to depend solely on the later inscriptions which throw considerable light on the constitution and character of the settlements and also on certain immediate post-Cēra inscriptions, which record the establishment of some new settlements.

In examining the character of a settlement we may start with some inscriptions which record the 'creation' of new settlements, fusing together elements from the already existing ones. Although these records are slightly later in date, the general pattern can be discerned from them and there is no reason why it should not have been the same in the immediate past, when the earlier settlements came into being. Moreover, one of them, the Kollūr Maḍham Plates, purports to be the renewal of a charter alleged to have been issued by the mother of Śrīvallavan Kōtai, ruler of Vēṇād[6], whose date is known to be of the latter half of the tenth century, A.D , when the Cēra kingdom was at its highest. According to it, land is set apart for meeting the various expenses of the temple, viz. rituals, festivals, payment to temple functionaries etc. and also as private property or *Brahmasvam* of the twenty-three Brahman families settled there. A similar case is registered in the Kiḷimānūr record of A.D. 1169[7], where ten different Brahmans

from eight of the 'origidal' thirty-two village settlements are brought to south Kerala and established around a newly consecrated Tiruppāl-kkaḍal temple. These Brahmans are given the right to enjoy certain properties as a remuneration for the management of the temple affairs which they are entrusted with. An unpublished lithic epigraph from Ṭirūvadur in North Kerala, dated A.D. c. 1020,[8] entrusts similar duties to twenty-four Brahmans who are brought there from five village settlements in Central Kerala. They are given the right to enjoy some properties perpetually according to the rule of primogeniture. The above instances show that the Brahman settlements revolved round the temple and that the village property, whose collateral ownership was enjoyed by the temples, was virtually the property of the Brahmans. While each individual managed personally his private property called the *Brahmasvam*, the common property of the temple called *Devasvam* and other temple affairs were looked after jointly by the Brahman population of the village. This was the essence of the administration of the village; and it meant virtually something like the management of property.

From a close study of the inscriptions, it appears that the 'General Body' of the village Administration was constituted by this Brahman population[9]. This body was called the *Ur*, *Urar* or *Uralar*, meaning literally the village, inhabitants of the village and the owners or proprietors of the village respectively; but used as synonyms. The term *Uralar* is used even now in Kerala to denote trustees of temples and temple properties; and almost all of them are Brahmans too. It may not be incorrect to assume that this is the continuation of the old institution. However, the inscriptions tell us that the administration of the temple affairs was carried out by the *Urar* and this would mean that all the Brahman inhabitants were members of this assembly and, as mentioned above, that the common property of the temple was virtually their properties. But, that a decision was made by the *Urar* does not necessarily mean that all the inhabitants were present at the time when each transaction was made. The heads of all property-owning brahman families joined together to take serious decisions. Dr.

Minakshi's suggestion, referring to a similar context in the Pallava Kingdom, that they were "assemblies consisting of the intelligent and distinguished men of the locality having the power to deliberate over questions of public importance"[10] is questionable. Still, cases of extraordinary meetings of all the members of the general body are also registdered as in the case recorded in a Trikkaḍittānam inscription dated in the second regnal year of Ravi Rama (c A.D. 1050)[11], where a unanimous decision is made to confiscate the house and properties of one Teñcēri Cēnnan Tāyan, who is said to have stolen from the temple treasury. Similarly, another reference in Kaviyūr inscription dated in Kali 3052 (A D. 952)[12] states that even a unanimous decision of the *Urar* could not alter the decisions registered in that document. These show, on the one hand, that for very important matters such as punishing a serious offense or amending a basic regulation, an extra-ordinary meeting of all the members used to be convened at times and, on the other, that such a gathering was not called upon usually as a rule.

To denote the *Urar*, other terms like the *Tali*, *Tali Adhikarikal*, *Taliyar*, *Sabhai*, *Sabhaiyar* etc. are also used. That the *Ur and Sabhai* in Kerala was one and the same is very interesting because, in the Tamil counterparts of Kerala inscriptions, the former is said to have been used to denote non-Brahman villages and the latter, *Brahmadeyas*[13]. In the present state of our knowledge, however, no convincing explanation can be given to this discrepancy. Another way of referring to them was giving their numbers or strength. Thus, we have the *Uralar* of Tiruvāṟṟuvāy[14], Neṭumpuṟam Taḷi,[15], Pudukkōḍe[16] etc. referred to as the *Patinettu natiar* (eighteen residents) those of Kumāranallur as *Painarumar*, (the sixteen)[17]; those of Āvaṭṭippittūr as *Erupatteluvar* (the twenty seven)[13] and so on.

Although all the powers of the village assembly rested nominally with the *Uralar*, an executive committee called the *Paratai*, *Paritai*, *Paraṭaiyar* (a corrupt form of Sanskrit *Parishad)* can be seen to be looking into the day-to-day affairs of the temple. It is interesting to compare them with the *Mulaparudaiyar* of centemporary Tamil records[19].

They are chosen from among the *Uralar* themselves. They seem to have enjoyed certain special privileges such as free-meal etc. from the temple[20]. The exact nature of the constitution of this committee is not very clear. The Kiḷimānūr record of the immediate post-Cēra period mentioned above, however, throws some light on this aspect of the problem. It is stated that from among the ten Brahmans who constituted the settlement, two each for a period of one year were to be charged with the duty of managing the temple affairs, and that this was to go on by rotation perpetually, again according to primogeniture. The *Ulpatan and Perumutiyan* of the Trikkākkara inscriptions[21] are discharging the same duties as of the *Parataiyar*. The representatives of the four leading settlements, viz. Paṟavūr, Mūḻikkaḷam, Airānikkaḷam and Iriñjalakkuḍa constituted the eight *Taliyatiris* of the *Nalu Tali*[22], and in this case also they were two each. These tend to show that the number of the *Parataiyar* was two, although this need not necessarily have been a rigid rule. Membership to this was obviously restricted to property owning Brahmans alone since the body of *Uralar* from which they were selected was constituted thus; and it appears from an Airānikkaḷam inscription that this was qualified further by proficiency in Vedas, observance of the moral codes etc[23]. Therefore, kinship affiliation, property qualification and educational standards seem to have been the eligiblity for being members of this body.

Apart from the *Paratai*, which looked into the executive matters in general, matters of some specific temporary endowments were entrusted to bodies called *Kanams* (Sanskrit - *Gana*) constituted for the purpose. Thus we have several *Kanams* such as the *Tirunalkkanam*, *Tiruvaratanaikkanam*, *Uttirakanam* etc each looking after the endowments made for the conduct or ceremony after which it is named. In contemporary Tamil records the *ganas* look after small subsidiary shrines within the main temple[24]. The case in Kerala is slightly different. Where these endowments were of a perpetual nature, the membership of these bodies seem to have gone on hereditarily, as

suggested by a Perunna Inscription[25].

Officers called *Potuval* and *Variyan* are also known. *Potuval* seems to be the general secretary[26]. At some places, he is called *Samanjitan*. From inscriptions, *akappotuval* and *purappotuval* are known. From the literal meaning of these words it appears that while the former looked after the internal affairs of the temple such as the day-today offerings, rituals, festivals etc , the latter managed matters external to the temple, like land, properties etc. *Variyan* seems to be the accountant and the one in charge of revenue etc. In contemporary Tamil inscriptions we come accross committees called *Variyams* constituted for the discharge of specific administrative duties[27], and although this may be the root from which *Variyan* (member of the committee) is derived, the committee as such is markedly absent in Kerala. This also cannot be explained convincingly.

The numerous temple inscriptions throw much light on the procedure of these bodies. They record transactions of the *Uralar*, *Parataiyar*, *Kanattar*, *Potuval* etc. meeting on the premises of the temple, mostly in the presence of the King or his representatives. Since the inscriptions make use of the phrase, "*kuraivu tirttu kooti*", it appears that full attendance was the practice and that no quorum was prescribed. The decisions made were unanimous, as indicated by the phrase, "*avirotattal*" (without opposition). One does not know how this unanimity was reached upon, ironing out the differences. However, a Neṭumpuṛam Taḷi inscription[28] indicates that some force was used for this. There, the *Patanayar* (commander of forces) is said to have talked the assembly into agreement, over matters of the temple and diety. As mentioned already, several other inscriptions would have it that the king or his representative was present at the time of the meeting of the assembly[29]. This would suggest that although these bodies were largely autonomous, there was a nominal control over them from above and that at times of exigency, this control was exercised too.

The decisions made by these assemblies were followed up strictly.

Those who violated the rules were punished severely. We have seen a case of a convict being ex-communicated and his properties confiscated against embezzlement. In most of the cases fines are prescribed against violation of rules[30]. In some other cases, the dissenters are equated with those who have "married their mother"[31], "slain their father and married their mother"[32], "slain the teacher who initiated them into the Vedas and taught it"[33] "slain their mother"[34] etc. These and similar imprecatory clauses found in contemporary south Indian records are more than mere senseless or abortive curses[35]. In a society, which attached very high importance to moral and spiritual values and where the indulgence in one of the *pancamahapapas* (five heinous sins) made one liable to be ostracised, these phrases acquire more meaning than that. Ostracism, it may be noted, was one of the severest of punishments meted out in India till recently. These clauses must further be viewed against the zeal with which the interests of the upper class were safeguarded.

Similarly, certain rules regarding the proceedings and functioning of the temple committees were also in vogue. The most commonly referred code is the *Mulikkala Kaccam*[36]. This is quoted from Tirunandikkara in the South to Elimalai in the North. Similar codes like the *Kadangattu Kaccam*[37], *Kot.uvayiraveli Kaccam*[38], *Kaitavaratu Kaccam*[39], *Tavaranur Kaccam*[40], *Sankaramangalattu Kaccam*[41] etc were also there. Prof Elamkulam has pointed out that these rules were to check the *Uralar* against autocratic practices and to protect the tenants from being harassed. But in view of the interests of the Brahman community which constituted and controlled these assemblies, and their enthusiasm to consolidate and maintain their position, it is more proper to agree with Dr. Narayanan, that these were largely regulations which prevented any act that may prove detrimental to the Brahman community and their properties.

The functions of these bodies were three-fold. In the first place, there was the management of the properties belonging to the temple and the administration of the day-to-day affairs of the temple. The temple

properties were constituted largely by gifts of land and gold made by chieftains and other well-to-do men of society. These gifts were received by the *Uralar* and *Parataiyar* on behalf of the temple and were owned collaterally by them. The lands thus received were leased out for cultivation. Gold was lent out for interest[42]. In some cases, members of the *Ur* and *Paratai* are prohibited from becoming tenants of the temple and from borrowing from the temple treasury[43]. In some other cases, the *Uralar* were prohibited from keeping the tenants' women as their concubines[44]. This fact must be viewed particularly against the background of the system prevalent in Kerala till recently, where, on the one hand, the Brahmans enjoyed a high position in society and thereby the local people were willing to give them their women as concubines and on the other, only the eldest son of a Brahman family used to marry from his own caste and was entitled for his ancestral property while the younger sons went out for *sambandham* or concubinage with women of lower castes. These too show the zeal with which one single person was prevented from being corrupt against the common interests of the Brahman community as a whole.

Closely connected with the management of properties was the utilisation of the incomes accrued on them. This was, obviously, allocated to the day-to-day affairs of the temple. Expenses for the daily rituals and the seasonal festivals of the temple were to be met. So also, the functionaries of the temple, from the priest down to the sweeper were to be paid. In some cases the payments were made ready in gold or paddy. But in most of the cases people were entrusted with some land or gold, the income from which was to be utilised for the specific purpose. So also, service tenure of lands in lieu of the salary of the functionaries are known. Thus we come across several lands owned under these terms, called *jivitam* or *virutti* (Sanskrit-*Vrtti*). This marked a definite stage in the growth of fendalism in India and this percolated to the southern part of the peninsula by this time. It was the *Uralar* and the *Parataiyar* who appointed the *Santi* and the Professor of Mahabharata[45], as is evidenced by a Trikkadithānam inscription[46]. It is clearly stipulated that the *Uralar* could not be

candidates for these offices and that they could not accept bribe from the candidates while the appointment was made.

The settlement of disputes among the *Uralar* and between them on the one hand and the tenants on the other was another important function carried out by the assembly, Such a dispute and its settlement is registered in the Kumāranallur inscription mentioned above[47]. For violation of rules, the *Uralar* themselves were punished and ostracised[48]. This helped to consolidate the power of the assembly and to see it that its interests were not undermined either from within or from without.

A third important function of the assembly was the collection of revenue and the remittance of it to the royal treasury. This revenue was paid in return for the protection offerred by the king. This protection or *kaval* was accorded by the police force or *nital* constituted by the several "hundred organisations" called *munnurruvar*, *annurruvar*, *arunurruvar*, *elunurruvar* in the provinces or "the thousand" or *ayiram* at the cenre[49]. The revenue due from the village was fixed by the king. The interest of the assembly seems to have been taken into account when this assessment was made. An inscription from Trikkaḍittānam speaks of the *attaikkol* (annual revenue) being fixed by the ruler as twelve *kalams* of paddy, the rest being exempted and twenty-four *kalams* out of it being set apart for feeding Brahmans[50]. In another case, the *Uralar* of Perunneytal agreed to pay eighty kalams of paddy as *attaikkol* to the governor of Naṉṟuḻaināṭu and thereafter make a representation to the king that they be allowed to pay this amount and this amount alone to the *Koyil Adhikarikal* (the royal representative in charge of the temple), which was granted[51]. Another inscrtiption dated in the tenth regnal year of Rāma Kulaśēkhara recovered from the same temple says that when the king was sitting in council, he was pleased to grant forty *kalams* of paddy out of the āṭṭaikkōḷ due from that village for instituting *namaskaram* and *Maparatam* in that temple, and also to cancel the war tax collected hitherto[52]. This was obviously, following some representation from the *Ur* and *Potuval* of that village, as the inscription suggests.

This revenue, it may be noted incidentally, was due on the land and was contributed by individuals owning the land. The individual share was called *katamai*, meaning obligation. While the owners were to pay technically the *katamai* there are instances where some of the *Uralar* enjoined the tenants to pay this, as in the case recorded in a Trikkaḍittānam inscription[53]. This can also be taken as an index to the character of the assembly being a body to manage the properties rather than a popular assembly transacting on administrative matters.

Thus, we have the picture of the whole system. The king constituted the *koyinmai* or overlordship, as evidenced from his presence and the powers exercised by him. But in spite of this, we have seen that in the Brahman property owners remained the *Uranmai* or actual proprietorship of the village. The cultivators mannered the *karanmai* or tenancy. Although the third category had no place in the assembly, they occupied an important place in the system. In an inscription from Kumāranallūr, they are said to be residing within the village[54]. However, this three-tiered hierarchy with the king at the top, the *Uralar* in the middle and the *Karalar* at the bottom looked into the day-to-day affairs of the temple-centred Brahman settlements.

The above survey would reveal the nature of the organisation and administration in the Brahman village settlements in the later Cēra period. The inquiry into the mode of the constitution, procedure and functions of the various bodies of the village assembly and of the assembly itself can explain its character. Some scholars have pointed out that they were popular assemblies with a democratic character[55]. The very fact that they were constituted by Brahmans makes them far from being popular bodies. Moreover, it is seen that the *Uralar* and the temple were identified in the matter of property relations. The prescription of qualification of ownership of property and education to become members of these bodies is also significant. This, together with the kinship affiliation of the members and with the fact that membership of these assemblies passed on hereditarily through primogeniture make them too narrow in scope to be popular or democratic. Further, that

the decisions were taken unanimously and not by majority voting and that the presence of the royal authority and even some force from above are felt, are also interesting in this respect. Above all, the economic and social interests of the upper caste, which was safeguarded zealously by punishing offenses severely, both materially and morally, remain as the most important factor; and we know that these bodies were constituted and controlled by that class, whose interests were to be consolidated and protected ultimately. In a society ordained according to hierachical principles of caste and occupation, which is habitually obedient to royal authority and fearing the spiritual and moral sanctions and injuctions of the day (of which too, the authors were the Brahmans) and which was considerate to the interests of the upper caste, democracy is out of question. The superior position in society that the Brahmans were able to command by virtue of their economic affluence on the one side and their influencce at the central administration on the other, encouraged the process of Sanskritisation, and this left their village settlements all powerful. Thus, the weight of evidence tends to suggest that these were oligarchic organisations of the upper caste.

This survey prepares the ground work to study the significance of the Brahman settlements in Kerala in the mediaeval period. With this background, it would be interesting and easy to study how the Brahman settlements could assert their influence in society in the wake of the disintegration of the Cēra kingdom in the twelfth century and how the economic, social and political life of Kerala was shaped into what it was on the eve of the arrival of Vasco da Gama - towards the close of the fifteenth century.

NOTES :

1. He has published many research papers and monographs in Malayalam. They are condensed, translated and published in a single book. See Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History* (Kottayam, 1969).

2. M. G. S. Narayanan, *Political and Social Conditions of Kerala under the Kulasekhara Empire* (unpublished doctorate dissertation, University of Kerala, 1972).

3. The Brahmans of Kerala are refferred to as the *Aryas* in in inscriptions and traditions. See for example *Travancore Archaeological series*, V, pp. 40-6, *Keralolpatti*, (Mangalore version, reprint, Trivandrum, 1961) pp. 3-5. For the location and dating, see Veluthat Kesavan, *Aryan Brahman Settlements of Ancient Kerala* (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Calicut, 1974).

4. See Kesavan, *Op. Cit*, pp. 71-90.

5. "......the Brahmins of Nalu Tali and the 32 Aryan settlements whom they represented had the upper hand in this kingdom and......the kings were guided by their advice...... A kind of Brahmin oligarchy prevailed in Kerala though the government was monarchical in appearance". See *supra*, n. 2, p. 229. See also pp. 211-4; 238-243; *et passim*.

6. *T. A. S.*, IV, No. 7, pp. 22-65.

7. *Ibid*, V, I, pp. 63-5.

8. Nos. 477 and 478 of 1925. For decipherment, see eye copy of the inscription kept at the Department of History, University of Calicut.

9. Prof. Elamkulam doubts this point. See n. 1, pp 330-2. He was carried away by a mis understanding resulting from the

absence of caste suffixes in, and Tamilisation of, Brahman names in inscriptions. But the present writer has been able to demonstrate the continuity of most Brahman families figuring in inscriptions. See Kesavan, *Op. Cit*, pp. 101-120.

10. C. Minakshi, *Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas* (Madras, 1938), p. 121.

11. *T. A. S.*, V, No. 55, pp 172-6. See the amendments in reading by M. G. S. Narayanan, *Index to Cera Inscriptions*, (a companion volume to n. 2) *No*. A. 64.

12. *Ibid*, V. No. 2, p. 6 (revised text).

13. See T. V. Mahalingam, *South Indian Polity* (Madras, 1955), pp. 311-359; K. A Neelakanta Sastri, *The Colas*, IInd Edn., (Madras, 1955) p. 502. It would also be interesting to compare the Sabhaiyar with the Mahajanas or Mahattaras in the Deccan area. See A. S. Altekar, *The Rashtrakutas and Their times*, (Poona, 1934), pp 158-205.

14. See *T. A. S.*, II. No. 2, pp. 8-14 and No. 9 (III), pp. 85-6.

15. See Nos. 341, 342, 343 and 348 of 1924. *T. A.S*, VIII, 40-3.

16. No 3:4 of 1924. Unpublished.

17. *T. A. S.*, III, No. 49, pp. 191-6.

18. Nos. 360-2 of 1927 For the decipherment of 362, see *Bullettin of the Rama Varma Research Institute*, VIII, II, pp. 127-130. For the rest, see estampage and reading kept at the Department of History, Calicut University.

19. See Mahalingam, *Op. Cit*, pp. 344, 355, 366, 376, 387 et passim.

20. *T. A. S.*, VI, No. 52, p. 64.

21. *Ibid*, II, No. 7 (D), pp. 38-40; (M), pp. 48-9; III, No. 35, pp. 161-9; No. 42, pp. 179-182 etc.

22. See *supra*, n. 5.

23. *R V.R.I.B.*, IX, II, p. 134. This inscription prescribes a forfeiture of the right to *Paratai* and *Tanam* to those who violate certain rules and equate them with those who have killed the *upadhyaya* who initiated them into the Vedas and their father, thus indicating proficiency of Vedas to the members of the *Paratai*.

24. See Mahalingam, *Op. Cit*, p 377.

25. *T. A. S.*, V, p. 36.

26. It is interesting to enquire if this was a counterpart of the *Madhyasta* of Tamil inscriptions. See Mahalingam, *Op. Cit.*, p. 369.

27. *Ibid*, pp. 345-357; Minakshi, *Op. Cit.*; p, 127.

28. *T. A. S.*, VIII, No. 33 (VII) p. 42.

29. Fifty-five Cera inscriptions show this presence. For details see M. G. S. Narayanan, *Index*, Nos. A. 1; 9; 13-16; 25-27; 29; 31; 33; 36; 46; 53; 54; 63; 64; 66-68; 70; 72; 75; 76; 80; B. 3; 6; 8; 11; 13; 14; 15; 18; 19; 20; C. 2; 15; 12; 16-20; 22; 23; 27; 29-31; 37; 41; 42; 44.

30. *Ibid*, A. 1; 8; 9; 13; 14; 16; 19; 24; 25; 27; 31; 42; 43; 46; 47; 48; 56; 64; 70; 80; B. 3; 6; 7; 15; 16; C.8; 11; 12; 23; 24; 30; 31; 36; 37; 41; 42; 43.

31. *T. A. S.*, II, I, No. 2, p. 6.

32. *Ibid*, II, III, pp. 131-207.

33. *R. V. R. I. B.*, IX, II, p. 134.

34. *Ibid*, IX, I, p. 43.

35. Prof. Elamkulam, for example, takes them so. See *Janmi-sampradayam Keralattil* (Kottayam, 1959) pp. 39-40.

36. For a study of this Kaccam, see *Ibid*, pp. 28-35; Narayanan, n. 2, pp. 325-340.

37. See n. 18 above.

38. *T. A. S.*, VI, p. 194.

39. See n 23. above.

40. *South Indian Inscriptions*, V, No. 772, p. 334; No. 775, p. 335; No. 783, pp. 338-8.

41. See n. 32 above.

42. *T. A. S.*, II, III, pp. 131-207.

43. *Ibid*, II, No. 7 (C) pp. 34-7.

44. See Cokiram inscription published in M. G. S. Narayanan, *Kerala Caritrattinte Atisthanasilakal*, (Calicut, 1972), pp. 53-4.

45. For a study of the office called *Maparatapattan*, See Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Cila Kerala Caritra Prasnangal*, 2nd Edn,. (Kottayam, 1963), pp. 242-4.

46. *T. A. S.*, II, No 7 (C) pp. 34-7.

47. *Ibid*, III, No. 49, pp 191-6.

48. See nn. 33-35 above.

49. Till recently, these organisations were mistakenly regarded as popular bodies. For a study of the hundred and thousand organisations as a police force, see Narayanan, n. 2, pp. 353-366.

50. *T. A. S.*, V, No. 56 pp. 176-8.

51. *Ibid*, II, No. 7 (I) pp. 44-5.

52. *Ibid*, V, No. 12, pp. 37-40.

53. *Ibid*, III, No. 40, pp. 176-7.

54. *Ibid*, III, No. 49, pp. 191-7.

55. Elamkulam, n. 35, pp. 18-50 *passim*.

VI

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

In discussing the influence of the brahman settlements in mediaeval Kerala, one may look at the problem from two different angles, viz., the developments which took place in the already existing ones and the development and growth of new ones. It has been shown that even by the time of the estatblishment of the Cēra kingdom of Mahōdayapuram, the important brahman settlements of Kēraḷa had taken shape[1]. These settlements grew affiliating to themselves subsidiary settlements or *upagramas* as is evident from the numerous Cēra inscriptions. It is also clear from the records of that period that other settlements were coming into existence, apart from the original thirty-two settlements of tradition. In this way the land of Kerala was covered by a net-work of such settlements with the temples as their centres. Being strongholds of upper caste brahmanical ideas and institutions they provided Kerala with the necessary framework for the establishment of the brahmanical order of society.

Even after the disintegration of the Cēra kingdom, this process of the growth of brahman settlements continued. There were some developments in the traditional settlements. We may follow these

developmonts first, in order to appreciate the process of the rise and growth of new settlements.

The process of the growth of a typical brahman settlement could be studied at some length in the case of the Tiruvalla settlement, thanks to the lengthy Tiruvalla Copper plates[2]. Tiruvalla was among the more important brahman settlements which had been established by the time of revival of the Cera kingdom of Makotai, and it is one of the "thirty-two original ones"[3]. The document is a set of forty three copper plates of which some have been lost[4] Still, the surviving portion, running into 630 lines, throws a flood of light on the pattern in which this settlement grew in the course of time. The plates embody a series of documents pertaining to endowments, decisions and resolutions made from time to time, edited and codified into a single document. The record cannot be dated with any amount of certainty although the dates of some of the events registered in it can be ascertained through the astronomical date contained in it or through the occasional references to chieftains and other important personages. For instance, the dates of some donors like Vīra Cōḷa (A. D. 907-95) and Manukulāditya (A. D. 962-1020) mentioned in the record are known. The record is slightly later than these dates, but cannot be far removed from the twelfth century as indicated by its palaeography[5].

The extent of land possessed by the Tiruvalla temple, as shown by the document, is a clear index to the extent of economic control enjoyed by the temple-centred brahman settlement. For example, to feed brahmans in the temple *(agram)* alone, an extent of land, which could be sown with 12,634 *Kalams* of paddy seeds[6] was in the possession of the temple. For burning perpetual lamps in the temple, land sown with over 2,000 *kalams* of paddy was set apart. A subordinate temple, the Teriyarnatai, possessed land sown with 5600 *kaloms* of paddy. A revenue of 13,685 *parai* of paddy was earmarked for burning daily food offering to the deity, 1,237½ *parai* for purchasing ghee, etc[7].

A vast area of landed property, the income from which was utilised for the conduct of festivals, ceremonies etc. (which were many as

shown by the record), for certain special offerings to the deity, for the maintenance of the educational institution and hospital attached to the temple, for the payment of emoluments to the temple functionaries in rice, paddy and gold etc., lay outside the above list[8]. Lands assigned to the temple functionaries on service tenure also were large in extent[9]. This shows the degree of control exercised by the brahman settlement over land. The significance of this could be realised only when it is borne in mind that the economic system of these days was agrarian in character. The possession of much of land spread over several districts of Kerala entailed the control over large number of tenants and also many other feudal privileges.

Besides, the temple received wealth in other forms also. For example, the rent from certain lands was payable in gold[10]. Punishments for default were in the form of fines payable in gold. Donations in gold also added to the gold deposits with the temple. The temple used to grant loans, the interest accrued on which was another source of revenue in gold[11].

A different source of revenue was in the form of royal dues made over to the temple. The temple was given the right to exact certain taxes like the *valkkai* and *irai* from some villages[12]. A whole village, together with the right to collect the "eighteen taxes and the market duties" was assigned to the temple by Iravi Cirikaṇṭan, the ruler of Veṇpolināṭu. This grant is made empowering the temple to "protect the granted village from the wrath of kings and feudatories". This is a clear pointer to the growing political power of the temple-centred brahman settlement. The possession, by the settlement, of the vast wealth explains the influence it had on the religion, social and political life of the people during this period.

The case of Tiruvalla is not isolated; judged from the wealth possessed by other settlements in later years, one may assume that similar processes were at work in their cases also. For example, Iruṅṅāṭikkūṭal (the present day Iriñjālakuḍa) was another prosperous

settlement, whose tradition dates from the later Cēra period[14]. Palm leaf records of the 14th and 15th centuries recovered from temple speak of its continued prosperity[15]. Even to this day, this temple is among the richer ones in Kerala, owning landed property about sixty miles away from the temple. Similarly, other settlements also developed on parallel lines.

Another development during the period under review was the affiliation of different subsidiary settlements to the established ones of tradition. This process had begun during the Cēra period itself, for the earliest of the Cēra epigraphs, the Valappalli copper plate of Rajasekhara, pertains to an *upagrama* of Tiruvalla[16]. Another inscription discovered and deciphered by the present writer from the Peringara temple, datable to the 13th century, shows that around that temple was a brahman settlement, which became subsidiary to the Tiruvalla settlement[17]. Similarly, Trippanacci developed into a subsidiary settlement attached to the traditional brahman settlement of Karikkatu[18]. The subsidiary temples affiliated at present to Irinjalakuda are as many as five[19]. Some of these, at least, may have been acquired during our period. This process of growth in space signalised the growing influence of the brahman settlements in Kerala society.

At the same time, some of the settlements were becoming extinct. For example, Commanta was one of the established settlements under the Ceras of Makotai. It was one of the thirty-two original ones of tradition[20]. The temple has yielded a late 12th century inscription, which shows the wealth owned by that temple at the time. But in a 15th century *Sandesakavya* the messenger, *kokila* (the Indian cuckoo), while passing through the precincts of that temple, is silent about it[21]. This suggests that the brahman settlement around the temple had ceased to exist by the time of the work. The temple is in ruins today, unlike some other temples around which flourished other brahman settlements. Karantola, another of the thirty-two original ones met with the same fate although in a latar period. We do not know much about this settlement in the Cēra period except from traditional sources. However,

records of the 18th and 19th centuries show that this settlement could be identified with the present day Karathur village in Tirur Taluk in Malappuram district[22]. There are evidences to show that there were many brahman families in this village[23]. Towards the 18th century all of them except one became extinct due to failure of issues. All the landed property of that village-both *devasvam* and *brahmasvam* - came under the control of this family[24]. Even this family had no issues to succeed when in 1057 M. E. (A. D. 1872) the only surviving member, Trivikraman Namputiri conferred his title over all the properties to his grand-nephew who belonged to another settlement, namely Cokiram or Sukapuram[25]. Even to this day, this family continues to manage the temple and the properties. Although this process was of a later date, this could be taken as an indication of the process that was at work in some of the settlements. Some other brahman settlements like Isanamangalam, Kulavur, Atavur, Muppattumvarkkalam, Uliyannur, Ku'utanadu and Nirmanna also have ceased to exist, although some retain the temples, some the tradition and so forth[26]. This also must have taken place during the period under review. The reason for this obscurity is not, however, quite clear in all cases On account of the practice that only the eldest son in a family married from his own caste, certain families got extinct, and in some settlements, which consisted of only a few families alone, this resulted in the extinction of the very settlement[27]. Otherwise, there is no reason why some settlements should have decayed while others were generally prospering and new ones getting established.

Among the more important developments that were taking place during the period under review was the shift in the importance of particular settlements. The four leading settlements of Iruṅṅāṭikkūṭal, Paravūr, Mūḻikkaḷam and Airāṇikkaḷam with their representatives at the capital, Mahodayapuram, in the king's council called the Nālu Tali, represented the brahman community at the Cera court[28]. After the downfall of the Cera kingdom, the Nālu Taḷi seems to have lost its importance and the four settlements, which were represented in it were relegated to the background. Instead, two other settlements, Cōkiram

(the present-day Śukapuram) and Panniyur became the leading settlements, although the exact circumstances under which this shift took place are not known. A copper plate grant, issued from Mahōdayapuram by Vīra Rāghava Cakravartin in the year A. D. 1225 just mentions the Nālu Taḷi, but acknowledges the importance of Panniyūr and Cōkiram by including them among the members of the court which ratified the grant[29]. In later years, these two settlements grew in strength and influence. It may be remembered that during the period of Cēra hegemony, these settlements were just two others among the thirty two having no special significance or status.

Āḻuvāñcēri Tamprākkaḷ is traditionally the spiritual head of Cokiram settlement and Kaippanceri of Panniyyur settlement. A 14th Century *Manipravalam* work describes the Cōkiram settlement in laudatory terms, indicating the position of Āḻuvanceri as its leader :

> With Āḻuvanceri as the lord Viriñca, and Nīlan Curaran as the pericarp; with eight brahman families as the internal petals and the supporting (brahman) settlements as the external petals; with the learned brahmans approaching it to drink the honey that is knowledge with a buzz of Vedic recitation, the *grama* (settlement) flourishes like the lotus, fondled by the daughter of lotus (Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth) and blossoming forth from the naval of her lord[30].

Other works of the same period also throw light on the importance of Āḻuvāñceri[31]. Even to this day, his family is very rich and influential in society. Kaippañcēri was the head of Panniyūr. Much less is known about him, due partly to the fact that his family is now extinct and partly to that in the feuds between the two settlements (which we shall discuss at greater length), Panniyur was on the losing side. A palm-leaf record, recovered from the Kuttiśśēri family in Tirur Taluk, however, shows that Kaippañcēri was a rich brahman family even in the eighteenth century[32].

A very important development with regard to the brahman community of Kerala was that they rallied behind one of the above two factions. As Cōkiram and Panniyūr grew in importance, they fell out with each other. The immediate cause which precipitated this is not known with any amount of certainty. Jacobus Canter Visscher, who was the Dutch Chaplain at Cochin between 1717 and 1723 has cited two legends "which are not unworthy of record"[33]. According to the former, Ceraman Perumal, while leaving the country after partitioning it among his relatives, "originated these two parties, and he regulated the number of princes, noblemen, etc., who should belong to each, with the express command that if a king, prince or land-owner should be attacked by one of the opposite factions, he should be assisted by all the members of his own party, under pain or loss of privileges... Cheramperoumal's *(sic)* second reason for establishing these factions was to create a martial spirit lest, living in perpetual peace, the Malabar people should sink into effeminacy and thus become a prey to the surrounding nations"[34]. Since the legends of the periodical Perumals and the last Perumal partitioning the kingdom have been exposed by historical researches[35], this legend requires no serious attention. The second story is that these struggles developed from the feuds of two families, each of which owned one of the two pagodas. While Choddar (*sic.*, for Cōkiram) implored help from Walvonatti (*sic.*, for Vaḷḷuvanāḍu), and subsequently from Cochin, Pandal (*sic.* for Panniyūr) conspired with the Zemorin against them. "Each of these monarchs enticed others to espouse their causes, and the dissensions thus originating have descended to posterity"[36]. Visscher, writing in the 18th century, did not have much idea of the significance of the brahman settlements in the life of Kerala. Therefore, it is useless to consider this legend too, although the gist of it that the two settlements implored the help of the respective chieftains, may contain some reflection of the truth. William Logan has suggested that it may have been the reflection of the hostilities between the Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Calūkyas[37]. Logan, while compiling the manual, did not have access to the unnoticed and unpublished inscriptions and literary works pertai-

ning to the period of the origin of these factions. The general impression during that period, that Kerala was conquered by the Cālūkyas and later by the Rāṣtrakūṭas, has been proved wrong by later researches. Therefore, it is not necessary to project the quarrels between these two big powers to two remote villages in Kerala.

Brahmanical traditions have it that one of the reasons for this dispute was the competition in the field of learning and scholarship[38]. The people of the Panniyūr settlement grew jealous of the proficiency exhibited by Cōkiram and accepted some teachers from *Paradesa*. This was objected to by the deity of Panniyur. The brahmans wanted to overcome this by reducing the power of the deity. They did many impious and indecent actions to pollute the deity. This made them inferior and they came to be looked down upon by the rest of the community. This legend may be record of the memories of the disputes in the field of learning, and a valid reason for the hostilities which developed in later years although this need not be taken as the only reason.

Several literary works of the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, the importance of which was not known to early writers like Visscher and Logan, abound in references to this long-drawn quarrel between the settlements. *Unniccirutevicaritam*, a mediaeval *Manipravalam campu* which narrates the story of a courtesan hailing from the precincts of Cōkiram temple uses glowing terms for praising brahmans of the Cokiram settlement and denigrating those of the Panniyūr settlement[39]. A *Sandesakavya* of almost the same period, seems to take the side of Panniyūr. It lauds a leading brahman chieftain, Tirumalaśśeri of the settlement, "who was constantly fighting to secure the position of the Panniyūr faction"[40]. Other contemporary works also refer to these quarrels. Even *Lilatilakam*, the grammar of Maṇipravāḷam produced in this period, alludes to this quarrel and quotes a verse describing picturesquely how praties belonging to the two were fighting with each other in a marriage ceremony[41].

This struggle, which began probably as a petty feud between two

brahman settlements, grew into larger dimensions in the later years. The whole of the brahman settlements of Kerala reallied behind either of the two, which was followed by far reaching consequences. The many petty principalities, which rose on the ruins of the Cēra kingdom by the beginning of the 12th century, espoused the cause of either of the settlements. The Rājā of Cochin, with the two feudatory brahman chieftains of Ambalappuḻa and Paṛavūr and *Samantas* of Vaṭ kkumkūr and Ālaṅgāḍu as the four "pillars of the kingdom", was a patron of the Cōkiram faction[42]. Vaḷḷuvanāḍu was already patronising this faction[43]. Similarly, the Zamorin of Calicut and his feudatories were supporting the cause of, and being supported by, Panniyūr[44]. This alignment of political powers with the two factions had a crucial role to play in the political history of Kerala in later years, when Cochin and Calicut were engaged in a bid for mastery over the land. This division of Central Kerala into two and the factious spirit generated by it contributed a great deal to keep up the continual warfare between the two major powers of Kerala[45]. The Portuguese found this a good opportunity and played one power against the other[46]. That a petty feud between two brahman settlements should have grown into such dimensions as to influence the course of political history for centuries together, itself is an index to the extent of influence exerted by the brahman settlements in Kerala society.

New settlements :

Apart from the thirty-two original *gramas* of tradition and their *upagramas*, there were other settlements coming up. In fact, it was in this way that the whole of Kerala came to be covered by a net work of brahman settlements, owning land in large extent with control over a large number of tenants and the entailing feudal privileges. Even though these new settlements were independent of the traditional settlements, they were formed by recruiting elements from the ones existing already A few inscriptions tell us directly from which settlements such recruitments were made. Even in others, where we do not possess records of the establishment of the settlement, survivals of existing

brahmanical tradition say that the brahman population of those regions trace their ancestry to some of the original settlements of tradition. It was in this way that the brahmanical order was able to assert itself in Kerala society in the period under review.

There are a few records which clearly indicate the pattern in which the settlements are made. This practice seems to have existed as early as the period of the Cēras of Makōtai. An undated Tiruvaḍūr inscription, ascribed to the close of the tenth century, speaks of the creation of a brahman settlement in Tiruvaḍūr in North Kerala[47]. Twenty four brahmans - six from Āvaṭṭipputtūr, four from Iruṅgāṭikkūṭal, seven from Peruvanam, two from Paṛavūr and five from Vaikkam - are drawn together to constitute a fresh settlement. The identity of each individual is clearly given and many families among them survive even to this day, both in the original settlements and in Tiruvaḍūr. Land is allotted for the temple-centred brahman settlement with perpetual hereditory right to be succeeded according to the rule of primogeniture. In the event of failure of issues, it is clearly stated, relatives were to enjoy the share.

It is curious why brahmans from central Kerala should have been chosen to constitue this settlement in the North, especially so considering the proximity of Tiruvaḍūr to prosperous settlements like Perumcellūr and Payyannūr. It may be that the local feudatory chieftain of the Mūṣaka kingdom was persuaded by his overlord, the Cēra king, to patronise brahmans around the capital or that the Mūṣaka chifetain, who was not on good terms with brahmans already existing in his kingdom, invited new brahmans from central Kerala to form a fresh settlement. We have no evidence. That Vaikkam, which is not mentioned in the traditionalaccounts as an established brahman settlement, figures in this record as one of the settlements supplying constituents to the newly created settlement is also interesting. It may be assumed that by the eleventh century there was another settlement around the famous Śiva temple at Vaikkam, which even to this day survives with its fabulous wealth.

Another interesting case is registered in a Kiḷimānūr record[48]. Dated in Kollam 343, i. e., A. D. 1169, this document registers the

grant of land as temple property for the maintenance of a newly consecrated Tiruppālkkaḍal temple and also as *brahmasvam* for ten brahman families who were to be the *uralar* of the temple oriented village settlement. The ten brahmans were drawn from eight different settlements of tradition. Paṛavūr, Mūḻikkalam, Airāṇikkaḷam, Iruṅgāṭikkūṭal, Peruvanam, Chengaṇūr, Tiruvallavāḻ and Āṛammuḷa. The names of each individual, his father and his family are given and as in the earlier case, it is possible to identify the survival of most families, both in the original settlements and in Tiruppālkkaḍal. Each is given, as per the document, land to be sown with six *kalams* of paddy, house-sites and a pair of serfs to work the land. The earlier occupants of the land were to be the tenants under the new settlers. For the purpose of the management of the temple, a committee of two out of the ten was selected for a term of one year. After the term, another committee of two members was to officiate, and it was to go by rotation in this way. This arrangement was made in perpetuity according to the rule of primogeniture.

Another document, dated A.D. 1189 purports to be the reissue of a charter of the tenth century[49], In this record, land is set apart for the routine expenses of the temple and the maintenance of a brahman settlement around it. The settlement is constituted by 23 families, although the details of the original settlements from which these elements are taken are not known. However, the names of the families are given and investigations show that many of them belonged to the traditional settlements of Tiruvalla, Ceṅguṇṛūr, Āṛanviḷa, etc. An extent of paddy fields to be sown with 1365 of *parai* seeds together with garden lands and house-sites are given by way of *brahmasvam* to the 23 brahman families. Provision is made for the daily offerings to the diety and for the expenses of festivals and ceremonies, for *virutti* or land on service tenure in lieu of salary for hereditary temple servants and for *jivitam* or payment for casual employees of the temple. Rules for the management of the properties are stipulated and punishment is prescribed for violation of rules. The lands given as *brahmasvam* or the house sites around the temple were not to be sold, mortgaged, donated or otherwise transacted[50],

Similiarly, other settlements were also in existence. A large number of inscriptions dating from this period bear testimony to the fact that brahman settlements were established around newly consecrated temples. The records also suggest that the pattern of the new settlements was similar to that of the old settlement. The changes that were taking place in the internal organisation of the older settlements affected the new ones too.

Another important feature of some of the new settlements was that the temples around which they were created were centres of local chieftains. Tiruvānantapuram (modern Trivandrum) was among the more important ones of these. Although it was not the capital of Veṇāḍu until the close of the eighteenth century[51], the temple and the brahman settlement around it were patronised munificently by the rulers of Vēṅāḍu. The affairs of the temple were carried out by a council of eight members called *ettarayogam*[52]. Records of the Śrīpadmanābhasvāmin temple of Trivandrum, known as the *Matilakam Grandhavari* dating from the latter half of the fourteenth century are available to us. Inscriptions on stone dating from an earlier period are also available. All these give the impression that the temple at Trivandrum was a centre of another brahman settlement and also that royal patronage was received by the temple on a large scale. There are many instances where the brahman oligarchy who controlled the temple caused the chief of Vēṇāḍu to pay heavy fines to the temple for different offences[52]. Unlike in the case of most other temples, the decisions taken by the brahman committee were conveyed to the ruler by a representative of the *ettarayogam*. This shows that the temple of Trivandrum, although it existed in the ninth century as evidenced by the hymns of Nammāḻvār[54], developed mostly as a 'royal' temple in the post-Cēra period and not only as the centre of a brahman settlement like Tiruvalla or Irinjalakkuda.

Similar temples at the centres of local chieftains developed during this period. Examples could be found in Kandiyur, the capital of Ōḍanāḍu, patronised by the chiefs of that principality[55]; Kadathuruthi

the capital of Vaḍakkumkūr; Trippunithura the capital of Cochin; Kozhikode Taḷi at the capital of the Zamorins, etc. The growth of Guruvāyūr may also be put down to this. That temple developed mostly as an out-post of the Zamorins of Calicut during their march to the south rather than as a brahman settlement[56].

Thus, the picture that would emerge of the period under discussion is one of the growth of the old brahman settlements in space and in the range of economic, social and political activities. The fact that a few settlements were fading out did not affect the general pattern. For, new settlements emerged, which were made up of brahmanical elements recruited from the already existing ones. The influence of the brahman settlements was enhanced by the fact that they were also patroniṣed by the local chieftains. The temples were identified as a medium for their authority to communicate with the masses through the organised groups of brahmans On the whole, the settlements grew economically powerful and played a dominant role in society. In the absence of a central authority after the disintagration of the Cēra kingdom early in the twelfth century, the brahmandom with a pan-Kerala stamp and respectability dictated the course of history in Kerala, much in the same way as the Catholic church in medieval Europe.

NOTES :

1. See supra, Chapter on Original Settlements.

2. *T. A. S,* II, iii, pp. 131-207. The label given by Gopinatha Rao is "Huzur Office Plates". There are other documents of that name.

3. See supra, p.

4. Plate Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7, 16, 32, and 41 and possibly some more at the end are missing.

5. For a discussion of the date of this record, See Narayanan, *Index*, No. A. 80.

6. Land was measured in terms of the measure of seed sown in it. For an idea of the different weights and measures, see Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*, pp 479-488.

7. *T. A. S.* 11, iii, pp. 131-207, *passim.*

8. See, e. g. *ibid,* 11. 361, 403-38, 494-517, *passim.*

9. See, *ibid*, 11. 88, 276, 307, 352-56, 551, 553, 616, 619, *et passim.*

10. Ibid, 11. 459-473.

11. Ibid, 1. 443.

12. Ibid, 11. 240-1, 243, 252, 293-301, 316 *et passim.* For a study of the various taxes, See Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*, pp. 366-396.

13. *Ibid,* 11. 329-42.

14. *Supra,* P.

15. See K. Rama Pisharodi, "Temple Studies" *Bullettin of the Rama Varma Research Institute*, No. 2. (May, 1933), pp. 45 ff.

16. *T A S.*, II, i, p. 6 (No. 2) See also V. R. Nambyar, "Annals and Antiquities of Tiruvalla", *Kerala Society Papers,* II, pp. 57-98 and notes by T. K. Joseph.

17. See estampage and eye-copy of the Peringara inscription prepared by the present writer and maintained by the Department of History, University of Calicut. See also V. R. Nambiar, *loc. cit.*

18. See A. K. T. K. M. Narayanan Namputiripad, "Namputirimarute Grammangal", in P. R. Namputiri, ed , *Namputirimar*, (Trichur 1918), p. 55.

19. Tachudaya Kaimal, *Kudal Manikyam,* (Irinjalakuda, 1966).

20. See *Supra*, P. and plates Nos. 1 and 2; M.R. Raghava Varier, "Fragmentary Inscription of Chemmanda and the HIstory of an Early Brahman settlement" *J. K. S.*, I, iv, pp 389-393.

21. Uddanda, *Kokilasandesa*, vv 84-5, See K. Achyyutha Menon, et. al et., *Rantu Sandesannal*, (Trichur, 1900) p. 42. This portion describes the temple before and aftar Cemmanta, See also Varier, *loc. cit.*

22. See *supra*, p.

23 Names of compounds like Muttedatta Paramba, Etamana Illaparamba, Kılakke Illaparamba, Maccinceri Illaparamba, Nampillatte Paramba, Manappula Illaparamba and several others show that there were many brahman houses in this village.

24. Revenue records show that in the 19th century there was only Re. 1 As. 10 and Pe 3. payable by another in the whole village. The rest was paid by Karathole Etaman Namputiri. See records of Tirunnavaya Amsam.

25. See the family records of Veluttathu Namputiri, P.O. Chennara Mangalam, Malappuram district. The present author belongs to this family and the recipient was his great-grand-uncle.

26. See *inrfa*, Appendix - I.

27. See *infra*, Chapter on "Changes in Organisation and Administration".

28. For a study of the Nālu Tali, See Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*, 211-4; 299; 238-43; *et passim*.

29. E. I., IV. pp 290-7.

30. Suranad Kunjan Pillai, ed., *Unnicciruteví caritam*, (Trivandrum, 1956), pp. 21-2. Prose-4 (Translation by the present writer).

31. See Elamkulam, ed., *Kokasandesam*, (Kottayam, 1972) p. 44, v. 29.

32. Some Kuttisseri records were examined by the present writer at the Kuttisseri Mana. The above record is kept in the Deptt. of History, University of Calicut.

33. "Visscher's Letters from Malabar", Letter No. VIII. K. P. Padmanabha Menon has edited these letters in this *History of Kerala*, See Vol. i, pp 36-43. See also detailed notes by the editor, in *ibid*, pp. 418-9; 478-9.

34. *Ibid*, pp. 37-8.

35. See Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*, passim.

36. Menon, *History of Kerala*, I, p. 38.

37. William Logan, *Malabar*, reprint, (Madras, 1951) p. 275.

38. Kodungallur Kunjikuttan Tampuran, *Keralam*, III edn., (Cranganore, 1967), pp. 103-107.

39. See Note No. 25 above and also pp 19-20; 41. The long passage in p. 41 is especially interesting for the scathing way in which Panniyur is attacked.

40. *Kokasandesam,* vv. 26-7, p. 43 (Translation by the present writer).

41. Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, ed. *Lilatilakam,* (Kottayam, 1955), p. 118.

42. Visscher, *op. cit*. letter No. VIII. See Menon, *op.cit.* pp 39, 479-80.

43. See Cokiram inscription, Narayanan, *Index,* C. 18; C. 20. Supra, N. 26, p. 23.

44. *Kokasandesam*, op cit, v. 26, p. 43.

45. Visscher. op. cit. letter No. VIII. See. Menon, op. cit.

46. See K. M. Panikkar, *A History of Kerala* (Annamalainagar, 1959), pp. 52-60.

47. Nos. 477 and 478 of 1928. Originally noticed as two separate records, but actually forming parts of a single document. See Narayanan, *Index*. B 16.

48. *T. A. S*, V, i. pp 63-85.

49. *Ibid,* IV, No. 7., pp. 22-65.

50. *Ibid*, p. 62 11. 248-250. The actual word found for the last item, however, is *atirikikkavum* and this could also mean to change bounbaries.

51. See Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Caritrettinre Pascattalattil* (Kottayam, 1961, 1971) pp 122-133.

52. *Ibid,* pp 134-143.

53. See Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Jannisampradayam Keralattil*, (Kottayam, 1959, 1966), pp 56-8. It is interesting that, although in a different context, the kingdom of Veṇādu was dedicated to Sri Padmanabhasvāmin by Marthandavarma on 3rd January, 1750. See *TAS*, V, p. 27.

54. See *T. A. S.* I, xvi, pp. 289-291; pp. 292-4.

55. See K. V. Krishna Ayyar, "Guruvayur" *Journal of Indian History*, (December, 1962) pp. 835-856. M. G. S. Narayanan "Guruvayur - Oru Caritravalokanam", *The Guruvayur Temple Renovation Souvenir*, (Guruvayur, 1974), pp. 46-50. See also Veluthat Kesavan, "The Role of Temples in Kerala Society" *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol. III Part, pp 181-194.

VII

CHANGES IN THE ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The disintegration of the Cēra kingdom and the subsequent division of Kerala into many principalities resulted in some kind of anarchy and lawlessness. The local groups of brahmans, however, continued to be as vital as they were under the Cēra kingdom or even more. At many centres, the fall of the central authority was being falt only in a gradual way. Nevertheless, some crucial changes were taking place in the organisation and administration of the old and new brahman settlements between the twelfth and the sixteen h centuries. This could be explained as a result of the prosperity of the local groups in the midst of what may be described as a mild form of anarchy around themselves, the prosperity of an establishment with a pan-Kerala stamp above temporal authority. In this chapter we seek to follow these changes and to explain them in the light of available evidences.

The brahman settlements were well established in Kerala society even before the revival of the Cēra kingdom. In fact, they have been shown as a causative factor behind this revival[1]. They formed a class of non-cultivating land owners placed over a cultivating peasantry, organised in semi-autonomous corporations of an agrarian, feudal character[2]. It is clear from the documents of that period that all the members of the

village council known as the *sabha* or *ur* were present in the meetings as indicated by the phrase *kuraivutirttu kuti* Some kind of a superior force was felt because most meetings were presided over by the king himself or his representative. This force was occasionally exercised, too, as in the case recorded in a Cēra inscription where the commandar-in-chief talked the council into agreement over issues of the deity and the temple[3]. Those members of the council, who acted against the common interest of the *sabha* due to their own selfish motives or individual idiosyncracies were severely punished. In many cases, such dissenters were even equated with those involved in heinous sins[4]. There were certain universal codes of conduct like the *Mulikkala Kaccam* followed as a rule for the procedure in these councils, to protect and safeguard the common interests of the *sabha*[5]. All these would go to suggest the corporate character of the local groups of these upper caste people.

In the period following the disintegration of the Cēra kingdom, the brahman settlements retained some of their old characteristics while many of them underwent radical changes. One important change is the absence of a representative of central power in the meetings There was no longer any central authority and, naturally its presence and exercise of power was out of question. A large number of inscriptions dating from the twelfth century onwards, recording the resolutions of the temple-centred brahman settlements, do make reference to a higher authority, but here it is only to a representative of the local chieftain. The records of the Cēra kingdom show that a share of the proceeds of the temple, out of the fines paid, was to go to the Perumāḷ or the king, and another share to the local district governor[6]. In the documents of the period under review, these two catagories are absent. These facts may carry the implication that by this period the settlements were growing more powerful and autonomous in spite of the local chieftains. There was no central controlling agency.

This fact is also clear from another instance. The records of the temple centred brahman settlements of the Cēra kingdom frequently

refer to a model code of procedure known as the *Mulikkala Kaccam*[7]. This is quoted in inscriptions found through the length and breadth of Kerala. It is interesting that in none of the records of the post-Cēra period, this code is quoted. Instead there are local codes like the *Sankaramangalattu Kaccam* quoted in the Tiruvalla Coppre Plates[8] or the *Kottuvayiraveli Kaccam* mentioned in a couple of inscriptions from Trichur[9] followed in a limited area. This shows again how the brahman settlements had been shaking off some of a centralising force that was upon them and how they were getting localised.

Apart from this localisation of the brahman settlements, there was a clear loss of the corporate character also. The brahman groups under the Cēra kingdom acted more or less as single corporate entities. As suggested earlier all the meetings were attended by all the members, i. e., no quorum was prescribed. In the period under review, such phrases like *kuraivutirttu kuti* are absent. Moreover, in a couple of records belonging to the *Matilakam Granthavari*[10] it is stated that the absence of a member in a meeting was made up for by proxy, in one case by a relative of the member and in another, by a relative of another member of the council. These, together with the absence of insistance on full attendance, go to suggest that the council was loosing its corporate character.

Similarly, the temple-committee resolutions of the Cēra period clearly say that they were made unanimously, as indicated by the phrase *avirotattal*[11]. One does not actually know how this unanimity was achieved. It has been suggested that the common interest of the community acted as a cohesive force which ironed out all the differences[12]. It is also possible that the royal force present in the meeting also worked in the same direction, especially in the light of instances where dissent was discouraged and members were talked into agreement by the royal representative[13]. In the records of the period under review, this phrase also is conspicuous by its absence. It may be that the emphasis on unanimity, as in the case of full attendance, was not there. This suggests that individual members of the *sabha* often

assumed the upper hand instead of the royal power in earlier periods. That is, a power was generated within the body and external control was eliminated. Power came into the hands of the few who controlled these bodies, and the corporate character was replaced by the domination of a few members.

A third reason for this inference is the decrease in the number of the members of the council. The *sabha* of Āvaṭṭipputtūr in the Cēra period consisted of twenty seven members[14]. But some of the later records in palm leaf examined by the present writer[15] as well as local traditions clearly indicate that the *sabha* consisted of ten members in later years. Similarly, the *sabha* of Kumāranallūr originally consisted of 16 members[16]. But a present there are only ten families in the *grama*. We have seen in a previous chapter that some settlements were been eclipsed by others[17]. It is not clear why this was taking place. It may be suggested that on account of failure of issues, accelerated by the convention that only the eldest son in a family married from his own caste, families were getting extinct. However, so far as the properties of the temple and their administration were concerned, it was now coming to the hands of a few people. The form of government in these organisations was changing and the sense of being a corporate entity was gradually disappearing.

In its place some kind of domination of individuals evolved. The semi-autonomous character of the brahman settlements gradually gave way to complete autonomy. Each settlement was becoming a law unto itself, even to the extent of forcing the local chieftains to submit to the conventions of the temple[18] The Tiruvalla Copper Plates clearly mention that when a whole village, with all the right to exact the eighteen kinds of taxes and the market duties, was granted to the temple, the temple committee was asked by the donor, himself a local chieftain, to protect the benefice from the "wrath of kings and faudatories"[19]. Not only was temporal authority not felt or present when decisions pertaining to the temples were made but each brahman settlement around the temple even evolved into a parallel authority, nominally placed under a local chieftain, but virtually enjoying the status of a feudatory

chief in its own right. This situation also indicates the growing strength of a settlement. within the settlement, the strength of the oligarchy increased by means of the changes that took place in its organisation as we saw above. Thus with the weakening of the temporal power which originally wielded authority over the settlement, with the complete disappearance of unifying forces like the *Mulikkala Kaccam*, and with the loss of the corporate character of the brahman settlements, they came to be dominated by individuals in their organisation. It was this character that made them able to assert themselves in the economy and society and even polity, to a larger extent than their ancestors under the Cēra kingdom.

This oligarchy expressed itself in a number of ways. One of the more important aspects of it is the developyment of what in later years came to be called the organisation of the *Sanketam*. In an earlier section, we have seen how the temple-centred brahman settlements were growing in space. A small colony of brahmans established with the temple as the nucleus grew as a result of the receipt of more land by way of donation. This meant the recruitment of more and more tenants sub-tenants, peasant and serfs to the service of the temple. The temple itself grew by consecrating more and more subordinate dieties. This meant the appointment of more people as temple functionaries. A typical case of such a development is illustrated by the copious Tiruvalla Copper plates.[20] In this way the temple and the brahman settlement around it gradually became a system in itself commanding allegience of large sections of population. This command gave a certain immunity and jurisdiction to the complex.

K. P. Padmanabha Menon has described a *sanketam* thus:

A *sanketam* is a defined territory over which no king has any power to wield temporal authority .. within the boundries of the *sanketam* of a *devasvam*. It was the *devasvam* officials who wielded temporal power.[21] ...The king had only the position of protector. And, even to this post of protector, any king could be selected, whether or not he is the actual ruler of the territory in which the *sanketam*

is located... The officials of the *sanketam* and the king who is so chosen as the protector together wielded all power. This poweɹ included both civil and criminal[22].

This view is also supported by Prof. K. K. Pillay as he observes that the *sanketam* 'exercised a jurisdiction over the inbrabitants of the locality independent of the ruling power'[23].

Ramanatha Aiyar has also suggested that 'even the kings had no control over these corporations' and that "the lands belonging to the temples...were exempt from the payment of certain taxes and were under a special form of tenure"[24]. Two different kinds of *sanketams*, namely, the *kshetrasanketam* and the *gramasanketam* are said to have existed[25]. The *gramasanketam* was the *sanketam* of one of the thirty-two settlements while the *kshetrasanketam* was that of a fresh settlement around a temple. For practical purposes, however, there was no difference between the two. These scholars, however, believed that the *sanketam* was a sacerdotal dominion. But, even this sacerdotal stronghold was cultivated on the basis of the feudal institution of the *sanketam*.

A result of the increasing independence of the brahman *sanketams* was the consolidation of feudal land tenure in Kerala. The brahman proprietors of the *brahmasvam* and *devasvam* constituted as suggested earlier, a class of non-cultivating land owners placed over a cultivating peasantry. Even these peasants do not seem to have been themselves working the land. The *karanmai* or tenancy was made over to the original occupants of the village as we have seen in an earlier section[16]. The Kiḷimānūr record itself says that a pair of serfs were given to each of the new settlers to work the land allotted to him as *brahmasvam*. This would mean that even the tenants did not actually till the land. The tenants either employed the serfs to work the land or, alternately, they sublet the land further to the smaller peasants. However, the result was the creation of an intermediary class within the brahmanical complex.

In the records of the Cēra period, we see that there was a certain

amount of fixity of tenure[27]. Land tenure during the period that followed seems to have been growing more and more insecure. There are several in tances which illustrate this. For leaving their lands fallow they were evicted from their holdings as stated by two inscriptions from Harippāḍ[28]. Two other records from the same temple register the vacation of holdings by tenants themselves on account of the heavy burden of rent[29]. Similarly severe punishments were meted out to tenants for misconduct like impertinent dealings with the prisst and delay of payment of rent[30]. These punishments included eviction from the land. These instances clearly suggest that land tenure under the brahman *sanketams* was getting increasingly feudalised and that the power of these feudal landlords was growing beyond all propertions. This suggestion gets added strength against the background of the increasing political power of the *sanketam* and also the military character of the intermediary tenant groups, i.e. the Nāyars.

This feudal land system was controlled by the oligarchic *sanketams*. We have seen in an earlier section that, in spite of the growing influence of the brahmanical establishment, the control of the properties belonging to the temples was getting concentrated into the hands of a few. Probably failies were getting extinct frequently on account of failure of issues, partly because of the convention that the junior members did not marry from the community. In this event, as suggested by the Tiruvadur record[31], the nearest relatives inherited the right to the property of such families. We have even come across instances of the extinction of some settlements themselves. This explains the emergence in this period of brahmans in Kerala as big landlords, owing large estates as *brahmasvam* apart from the *devasvam* which they controlled. Even the *devasvam* lands, because of the loss of the corporate character of the council of the *uralar*, were gradually being transformed into the private property of individual brahmans. In this way, the brahman families emerged as a landed aristocracy as distinct from their position as trustees of corporations in an earlier period.

Professor Elamkulam has constructed a different model to explain

this situation in his work called *Janmisampradayam Keralattil*[32]. In fact, this may be regarded as the first ever attempt at conceptualisation in the historicai writing on ancient and medieval Kerala. He visualises the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few brahman families and temple-centred brahman settlements as a result of the appropriation of peasants' properties by the landlords. He was obviously carried away by a misunderstanding that most *uralar* of earlier temples were non-brahmans. Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan has suggested that they were brahman settlements[33] and the present writer has clearly identified them as brahmans and noted the continuity of many of the families even to the present day[34]. Prof. Elamkulam was probably misled by the absence of caste suffixes in these names. Furthar, his work is beset with other problems arising out of his biased approach to the study of the growth of landlordism, caused by his emotional reaction to the present-day situation. The questionability of his explanations apart, this assumption of the role of a "hanging judge" is, if anything, unhistorical.

The emergence of brahman landlordism was the inevitable culmination of historical evolution. The position of the brahmans as landlords with command over large tracts of land and tenants and other servants in large numbers entitled them to all feudal privileges. These privileges together with their sacerdotal offices placed them at the apex of society. It was this supremacy which influenced the pattern of social and cultural development in Kerala in the years to come.

NOTES:

1. Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empira*, op.cit , Chapter IV.

2. Kesavan "Organisation and Administration of the Brahman Settlements of Kerala in the later Cēra period, A.D.c. 800-1100, *Journal of Kerala Studies*, Vol. IV, Parts II and III, pp. 181-191."

3. *T. A. S.*, No. 33 (V), p. 41.

4. For a recent interpretation of the invocation of *mahapatakas* in south Indian records, see M. G. S. Narayanan "The Concept of Mahapatakas in Early Medieval South India", Indian History Congress, 1976.

5. Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*, Chapter VIII.

6. *Ibid*, Chapter IX

7. *Supra*, n. 5

8. *TAS*, II, iii, p. 192

9. *Ibid*, VI p. 194

10. The *Granthavari* is not published. The two instances mentioned here are quoted in Pillai, *Caritrattinre Pascattalattil*, pp. 132 and 138.

11. Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*, op.cit, Chapter VIII

12. *Ibid.*

13. See *Supra*, n. 3

14. *R.V. R. I. B*, VIII, ii, pp 127-30. There are other unpublished records in also the temple bearing the same date, See Narayanan, *Index* (op.cit), Nos. 4.11; A 12.

15. The author wishes to thank his brother-in-law, who is the Managing trustee of the temple for kindly making this task convenient. The records are not earlier than the 17th century.

16. *TAS*, III, No. 49, pp 191-6.

17. See *supra*, Chapter on "New Developments"

18. For instances, see *supra*, Chapter on 'New Developments'

19. T.A.S., II, iii, p. 191,

20. *Ibid*, passim. See also Kesavan, *Aryan Settlements*, op. cit, Chapter IV

21. K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *Koccirajyacaritram* (Trichur, 1912) p. 186. Translation by the present writer.

22. *Ibid* pp. 183, 187 Menon has quoted many examples in which chieftains outside the territory were invited to be protectors of Sanketams. See *Ibid*, pp 187 ff

23. K. K. Pillay, *The Sucindram Temple* (Madras, 1953)

24. A. S. Ramanatha Aiyar in *T.A.S.*, V p.207.

25. *Travancore Annual Report of Epigraphy*, No. 1103, p. B.

26. *Supra*, Chapter on "New Developments", n. 48

27. Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*, Chapter XI.

28. *T. A. S*, VI, Nos. 26 and 27

29. *Ibid*, Nos. 30 and 31

30. *Ibid*, Nos. 25, 28 and 29

31. See Supra, Chapter on "New Developments", n. 47.

32. *Op. cit*.

33. Narayanan, *Kulasekhara Empire*,

34. Kesavan, *Aryan Settlements*, pp. 102-120.

APPENDIX - I

LIST OF BRAHMAN SETTLEMENTS GIVEN IN THE KERALOLPATTI

(The settlements, except those specified otherwise, continue)

	Name of the grāma		Evidence in support of the tradition and the identification of the place.	Chief Deity of the Grāmakṣētra.	Remarks
	In the tradition or inscriptions.	present name			
1	Payyannūr	Payyannūr	Structural temple and continuing Brahman tradition	Śaivite	The Brahmans of this village follow matriliny
2	Cellūr or Perumcellūr	Perumcel ūr or Taḷipaṛamba	Sangam literature, 3 inscriptions, *Musakavamsakavya* (11th cent.), *Cellurnathodayam Campu* (c. 16th cent.) and structural temples.	Śaivite	
3	Ālattūr	Ālathiyūr	*Candrotsavam* (15th cent.) and temple buildings	Vaiṣṇavite	

1	2	3	4	5	6
4	Kārantōḷa	Kārattūr	Ruins of an old temple and cadjan leaf records	Vaiṣṇavite	Settlement is extinct
5	Cōkiram	Śukapuram	5 inscriptions, *Candrotsavam*, *Kokasandesam*, *Unniccirutevi caritam* and temple buildings.	Śaivite	
6	Panṛiyūr	Panniyūr	Two inscriptions, *Candrotsavam Unniccirutevicaritam* and temple	Vaiṣṇavite	
7	Karikkāṭu	Karikkāṭu	5 inscriptions and temple buildings	Śaivite	
8	Iyāna-maṅgalam	Īśāna-maṅgalam	3 inscriptions and *Candrotsavam*	Śaivite	Grāma exinct. Temple not clearly located.
9	Tṛśśivapērūr	Trichur	2 inscriptions, *Candrotsavam* and temple buildings	Śaivite	
10	Peruvanam	Perumanam	8 inscriptions, *Candrotsavam* and temple buildings	Śaivite	

1	2	3	4	5	6
11	Cāmuṇḍa or Perumcem-maṇṭaippu-ttur	Cemmaṇṭa	2 inscriptions and structural temple	Śaivite	Grāmakṣētra survives. Settlement is extinct
12	Iriṅgāṭi-kkūṭal	Iriñjālakuḍa	4 inscriptions, *Kokilasandesa*, *Candrotsavam* and structural temple.	Vaiṣṇavite	
13	Āvaṭṭippu-ttūr	Aviṭṭathūr	5 inscriptions and structural temple	Śaivite	
14	Paṛavūr (Paṛaiyūr)	North Parur	*Cilappatikaram*, 3 inscriptions and structural temple	Śaivite	
15	Airāṇi-kkaḷam	Airāṇikkuḷam	4 inscriptions and structural temple	Śaivite	
16	Mūḻikkaḷam	Mūḻikkuḷam	3 inscriptions, *Tiruvaymoli*, *Candrotsavam* and structural temple	Vaiṣṇavite	

1	2	3	4	5	6
17	Kuḻavūr	Kuḻūr	2 inscriptions and structural temple	Śaivite	Grāmakṣētra survives. Settlement is extinct.
18	Āṭavūr	Āṭūr	Structural temple and local traditions	Śaivite	Grāmakṣetra survives. Settlement is extinct.
19	Ceṅganāṭu	Ceṅgamanāṭu	1 inscription and temple in ruins	Śaivite	
20	Iḷibhyam or Muppattu-mūvarkka-lam	Tirumuppattu	*Kokasandesam* and *Sukasandesam*	Śaivite	Grāmakṣetra survives. settlement is extinct
21	Uḷiyannūr	Uḷiyannūr	1 inscriptions and temple buildings	Śaivite	Grāmakṣetra survives. settlement is extinct.

1	2	3	4	5	6
22	Kaḷutanaḍ	—	unidentified		Grāma is extinct
23	Eṛṛumānūr	Eṛṛumānūr	*Unnunilisandesom* and temple	Śaivite	
24	Kumāra-nallūr	Kumāranellūr	1 inscription and structural temple	Śaivite ? at present Durga temple	
25	Kāṭamaṛuku	Kāṭamuṛi	Structural temples and continuing Brahman tradition	Śaivite	
26	Āṛanviḷa	Āṛanmuḷa	1 inscription, *Tiruvaymoli* and temple buildings.	Vaiṣṇavite	
27	Tiruvallavaḷ	Tiruvalla	4 inscriptions, *Tiruvaymoli*, *Periya Tirumoli* and structural temples	Vaiṣṇavite	
28	Kiṭaṅgūr	Kiṭaṅgūr	Structural temple and continuing traditions.	Śaivite	

1	2	3	4	5	6
29	Ceṅkuṉṟūr	Cengannūr	3 inscriptions and structural temple	Śaivite	
30	Kaviyūr	Kaviyūr	2 inscriptions, rock-cut temple and structural temple	Śaivite	
31	Veṇmaṇi	Veṇmaṇi	Temple buildings and continuing Brahman traditions.	Vaiṣṇavite	
32	Nirmaṇṇa	Nirmaṇkara	Ruined temple	Vaiṣṇavite	Ruined Grāmakṣētra survives Settlement is extinct.

APPENDIX—II

THE CATTAS AND BHATTAS : A NEW INTERPRETATION

The words caṭṭas and bhaṭṭas, found in inscriptions dating from the early Gupta times, have posed a problem of identification and interpretation. Buhler[1] and Fleet[2] have interpreted them as "irregular and regular troops" respectively; and Kane[3] and Sircar[4] follow them. Dr. Bhandarkar[5], however, could not reconcile with this simplistic explanation; but he has offered no alternative.

The problem is rendered more complex by the different forms, viz. cāṭa, caṭṭas, and chātra used in different inscriptions of almost the same place and date, occurring in identical contexts. While the from caṭṭa is explained away as a misspelling, chātra is interpreted to mean, literally, "an umbrella-bearer" and by extension, a royal officer performing the duty of a constable[6]. The well-known meaning of the Sanskrit word *chatra* and its Prakrit corruption *catta* could not make any sense in their interpretation of the phrase. The present paper attempts at applying the meaning 'a student' to caṭṭa and consequentially, 'a teacher' to bhaṭṭa and thereby inquires into the possible social and cultural implications of an organisation, hitherto lost sight of by historians writing on ancient India. The study is made in the light of evidence from some inscriptions and literary works from or bearing upon, South India in the early medieval times.

The Pārthivapuram copper plates of the Āy King Karunandadakkan throw a flood of light on the nature of an organisation of caṭṭas, called śālai[7]. The record is dated in the 1449087th day of the Kali Era (A.D. 866), and registers the consecration af a Viṣṇu temple at Uḻakkuḍiviḷa, rechristened as Pārthivaśēkharapuram, together with the establishment of a śālai for ninety-five caṭṭas and the endowment of lands for the maintenance of both. Out of the ninety-five *kaloms* or seats instituted, forty-five were for candidates belonging to Pavaḻiva *(Bahvrica) carana*, thirty six, to Taittirīya caraṇa, and the remaining fourteen, to *Talavakara carana*. The seats to be instituted in future were to be divided equally among candidates belonging to the three caraṇas. In laying down the procedure for admission, it is stated that the candidate should not be disqualified to be a *vaiyakarana mimamsaka* or *purohita* and that he should have sufficient proficiency in the Vedas. The proscription of taking weapons to the class, of fighting with arms on the temple premises, of keeping maidservants in the *mathas* etc. is also significant. It is very interesting that the caṭṭas were held in high veneration and were called the caṭṭapperumakkaḷ. Another bilingual inscription from the same temple[8] identifies caṭṭa in the Tamil portion with chātra in Sanskrit.

In the above records two things stand out clear and unmistakable: (a) that the caṭṭas were essentially brahmana students and (b) that apart from the Vedic Sastraic lore, military training also formed an important part of their curriculum.

The śālai at Pārthivapuram was not the only one of its kind. It was, says the inscription, modelled on the lines of the śālai at Kāntaḷūr[9]. There were other śālais as well, known to the ninth, tenth and eleventh century inscriptions of Kerala. Names of places like Valiyaśālai, Cālappuṟam, Śrīvallabhapperumcālai etc. can also be believed to be relics of such institutions. These show that a strong net-work of these institutions was flourishing in Kerala by the ninth century.

An eighth century Jain Prakrit work called *Kuvalyamala* of Udyotanasūri from Jalor in Rajasthan throws much interesting sidelight on these institutions[10]. Even after giving due allowance for the element of exaggeration characteristic of such romantic works in which the caṭṭas are caricatured, one is able to find out the nature of the caṭṭānām maṭha described in the work. The matha at Vijayapuri in South India was some kind of a *gymansium*, where training was given simultaneously in Vedic-Śāstraic disciplines and in the art of warfare. The curriculum included among other things grammar, Buddhist philosophy and other manifold branches of *Sastras* as well as archery and fighting with daggers and sword and shied. Whether this particular maṭha was real or imaginary, and whether Vijayapuri was in Kerala or elsewhere in South India, the work shows the author's familiarity with such maṭhas of the *cattas*. Thus, the evidence offered by this work which is corroborated by epigraphic evidences, throws much welcome light on this peculiar institution of the *cattas* in South India.

The śālai had its counterparts in other parts of South India. The ghaṭikās of the Tamil country and some parts of Deccan were such educational institutions *par excellence*[11]. The Talagunda pillar inscription goes to prove the military aspects of the curriculum in the famous *ghatika* of Kāñci[12]. These organisations contributed a formidable asset to the military prowess of their patron monarchs, and the many references to the "pleasure" to "destroy the *kalam* (seats)" in the various *salais* and *ghatikas* situated in the kingdom of their rival manarchs could be explained easily in this light[13]. The references to endowments to these institutions by monarchs on a munificent scale point to the reciprocial allegiance that these para-military organisations must have shown and, subsequently, to the eagerness of their rivals to destory them.

Further information about the caṭṭas or cāttiras (Dravidian corruption of Sanskrit *chatra*) is available from the medieval *Manipravalam* (a mixture of Sanskrit and Malayalam) and Sanskrit works from Kerala[14]. All of them, in general, go to prove the continued existence

of the armsbearing brahmans through the medieval period.[14] In these works, however, they are described as frequenting the houses of courtesans, taking to blackmagic and similar unsocial practices. Many of these works, in fact, have a contepiuous eye towards them. The satirical poem called *Candrotsavam*, in particular, mentions the three groups of cāttirar called Bhaṭṭa, Prabhākara, and Vaiyākaraṇa participating in the moon festival conducted by a courtesan[15]. These three groups are known to traditions of later times also. It may be recalled in this context that the Pārthivapuram copper plates mentioned above stipulate that a candidate seeking admission to the śālai should not have been disqualified to be a purōhita, mīmāmsaka or vaiyākaraṇa. It may be assumed that as early as the date of that record, the above groups existed, or at least, that three loose groups were there in a recognisable form, which appear to have developed later into three distinct sections.

It is quite interesting to note the continuity of these groups of caṭṭas and bhaṭṭas even through the modern period. Although their military function ceased to exist, they retained, till recently, some kind of a dramatic performance, keeping up their military tradition. It included dances with sword and shield in either hand, moving forward and backward in a rhythmic style and even some sort of dual. This is conducted in modern times in connection with some social ceremonies like marriage etc. This performance is variously called Cāttirakkaḷi, Pānayum Kaḷiyum, Kṣātrāṅkam etc. etc.[16] The section in the *Candrotsavam* mentioned above contains some clues to the fact that even in the 15th century, this performance was in vogue[17]. The disappearance of the military organisation and the survival of their militaristic form of entertainment as part of social ceremonies could be explained as a result of the absence of any need of the brahmana militia, and its continuity even up to the modern times could be attributed to the rather petrified n ture of the Namputiri social organation. However, it is significant that although this was an exclusively Namputiri affair, all Namputiris did not participate in the Cāttirakkaḷi and that there was a separate section of the Namputiris called the Cāttiranampūtiris who alone performed it. They were a bit degraded in the Namputiri social order, and did not study the Vedas or perform sacrifices.[18]

The legendary brahmana chronicle of Kerala history called the *KeraloIpatti* of 17th century gives some interesting supplementary information about this armsbearing brahmanas of Kerala. Paraśurāma, after having reclaimed the land of Kerala from the sea and donated it to brahmanas, gave arms (śastrabhikṣa) to 36000 of them from ten different village settlements belonging to fourteen *gotras*. Because they wielded arms, they were called *ardhabrahmanas* (half-brahmanas), *sastrabrahmanas* (armed brahmanas) etc. and did not have to study Vedas[19]. The legend, although it cannot be taken *prima facie* as history, can be believed to be recording the vague memories about the social stratification dating from the period to which the memory of the authors of the chronicle goes. At any rate, it is very significant that they did not have the right to Vedas as given in the chronicle and as practised in later times.

As the caṭṭas are seen to be students, so the bhaṭṭas could be considered as teachers. Inscriptions refer to them as scholars engaged in discourses and lecturing in the Puranic lore.[20] Paṭṭattānam (Bhaṭṭa-sthān) was a coveted position of those days. This strand could be found running through the mediaeval literary works like *Unnunilisan-desa* etc. and the *Pattattanam* conferred at the Tali temple by the Zamorins of Calicut in the late mediaeval times used to attract even people like Uddaṇḍa, the well-known poet from Kāñcīpuram. A particular section of the Namputiris in Kerala called the *Bhattatiris* is the relic of old Bhaṭṭa (*tiri* being an honorific suffix in Malayalam). As was the rule of the day, lands were given to them on service tenure and this was called *Pattaviruti*. *Bhattavriti* lands are regular features in other Indian epigraphs also[21]. The relationship between the caṭṭas and bhaṭṭas is testified to by the many reference to both together not only in south India, but all over the country.

Against this background, one can look at references to the caṭṭas and bhaṭṭas in sources from the North. When some land or village is granted to brahmanas, it carried the privilege, among other things, of

being free from the entry of the caṭṭas and bhaṭṭas. This is expresed usually by the phrase, a—cāṭa=bhaṭaa=pravēśya, "not to be entered by the cāṭas and bhaṭas". Variant forms like a—caṭṭa=bhaṭṭa= pravēśya, a—bhaṭa=praveśya, a — bhaṭa = chātra = pravēśya, pratiniṣiddha=cāṭa=bhaṭa=praveśya etc. are used in different inscriptions of almost the same place and date. This immunity is found in records dating from the period of the guptas or even the Śātavāhanas.[22] From these early records one cannot make out anything with regard to their status in the administrative machinary etc. They are just mentioned as groups who were banned from entering into the benefices. But records of a later date, the earliest being the Mota Machiala grant of Dhruvasana dated A. D. 525[23], mention the cāṭas and bhaṭas along with other state officials.[24] This shows that these groups had some sort of recognition by the state, although nothing is known about their function, status etc. Being mentioned towards the end of the list, they can be believed to have been enjoying only a relatively low status in the bureaucraey, if at all they belonged to it, or alternately, their affiliation to the bureaucracy, was loose.[25]

The practice of granting lands with immunity from the entry of cāṭas and bhaṭas was so well-known in the North that we find it all over North India - the present day Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gurjarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Bengal etc. - in almost the same period. This shows that all over North India, this group was in existence with the knowlebge and recognition of temporal authority. Even in the Mayidavolu plates of Sivaskandavarman Pallava, the earliest known epigraph of the Pallavas, discovered from the Kistna Dist., the expression *abhadapapesaṃ* occurs in the context in which the phrase a=cāṭa=bhaṭa=pravesyam is used elsewhere,[26] although no other known epigraph from South India makes use of such or similar phrases. This would mean either that the executors of the document followed a regular pattern

set for preparing land-grants in which these *pariharas* are mentioned without understanding them fully, or that as early as the date of the grant (A.D. c. 350) the bhaṭṭas were there in the Deccan.

However, references die out in North India by the end of the eleventh or early twelfth century. Another significant point is that, even when the existence of this group is known in a charter granting land to a Buddhist Vihāra, it is not immune from the entry of this group[27].

What emerges from the above examination of evidences in North Indian epigraphs is that within the cultural complex of the Gupta empire, there was a group of the cāṭas and bhaṭas, who were prohibited from entering lands granted to *brahmans*. Although their status and functions are not khown from records of this period, later records show that they had something to do with state machinery or had some kind of a state recognition. Towards the close of the eleventh century, references to these groups start dying out.

The *Dharmasastras* also make mention of them[28]. For example, Yājñavalkya says that it is duty of the kings to protect people from the harassment caused by the cāṭas, robbers and Kāyasthas. The *Mitaksara* explains cāṭas as persons who deprive people of their wealth after creating false confidence in them, which statement is repeated verbatim in the *pancatantra*. Aparārka quotes Bṛhspati that dangers common to all are those arising from cāṭas and thieves. Ānandagiri explaining the words in Śaṅkara's *bhasya* of the *Brhadaranyaka* Upanisad, viz. tārkika-cāṭa-bhata-raj-āpravēśya says that "cāṭas are those who transgress the rules of conduct for decent people"[27]. That the *Dharmasastras* condemn them while inscriptions seem to recognise them may look a bit paradoxical. But when it is realised that the inscriptions also ban their entry to lands granted to brahmanas, it is not at all surprising that the brahmana authors of the *Dharmasastras* should have

looked down upon them with contempt. What is more significant is that we do not know anything about their caste affiliation. What we know, at this stage, is only that they did not constitute a caste in themselves.

But some references from the peripheral regions of the *Madhyadesa* show that they were brahmanas[30]. These records refer to "caṭṭas; bhaṭṭas and other noble brahmanas"[31]. An inscription from the Puri district in Orissa refers to Maitrayaṇīya-chātramaṭhabrāhmanas [32]. This, apart from being a clear instance where the chātras are brahmanas reminds one of the maṭhas of the South Indian sources In this connection, one might wonder if the *Kulina brahmana* titles like *Cattopadhyaya* and *Bhattacarya* had any relation with the *cattas* and *bhattas*,[33] especially when the association of education with these titles is taken into consideration. However, there is no reason why they should not have belonged to the brahmana *Varna* in the *Madhyadesa* also, although his surmise is the result of projecting the situation of the above areas and South India to North India, separated spatially and temporally.

The findings of the above survey may be summarised as follows :

1) As evident from tbe testimony of the inscriptions of *Madhyadesa* in the Gupta period and the *Dharmasastras* of more or less the same period, the caṭṭas were originally a looseknit group of people. They belonged probably to the brahmana *varna*, and were, probably students of the Vedas, i. e. *chatras*, though there is no clear evidence. They often acted as intruders into the possessions of others and were, therefore, looked upon with disapproval by the authors of the *sastra* literature In this context, they were clearly banned from entry into the chartered settlements of brahmanas.

2) In the post-Gupta period, the caṭṭas and bhaṭṭas are generally mentioned towards the end of the list of officials mentioned in inscriptions, probably because they were not strictly forming part of the administrative hierachy. They are conspicuously mentioned as

Brahmanottaras, in inscriptions from the peripheral regions of the Madhyadesa.

3) In South Indian records, they are organised groups of students trained in the Vedic lore and the art of warfare They were unmistakably of the Brahmaṇa *varna*, patronised liberally by the local rulers of the Pallava-Pandya age. This is continued in later times also.

In the light of the above findings the following hypothesis may be put forward as a starting point for further enquiry.

1) From South Indian records it is clear that the caṭṭas and and bhaṭṭas were entirely dependant on their royal patrons for maintenance and that, in turn, they served the kings in war and peace. If this relationship is projected backwards in time and made applicable to North India, — there is nothing on record to contradict it — they may be regarded as a peculiar group of brahmanas, performing both the traditional brahmana functions and the service of the kings. That they deviated from the strict principles of orthodox brahmanism and that they accepted some of the kṣatriya functions brought down upon them the contempt of the orthodox brahmanas, who were the authors of the *sastra* literature.

2) If it is true that brahmanas or brahmanism migrated eastward and southward from the Madhyadesa, and if it was not in a single wave, it is only natural that these groups also moved along the moving frontiers of that culture. During the course of this movement, it is only natural that changes should have taken place both in the nature and purpose of this institution as a result of the extension and separation both in space and time. Those changes transformed the *cattas*, who were the object of contempt among the orthodox brahmanas in the North, into pioneers of brahmanism in the South, and gained wealth and respectability under royal patronage. In other words, they were instrumental in the extension of brahmanism in the South with their peculiar para-military organisation of the ghaṭikā or śālai. It is well-known that Mayūraśarman, who is said to have been originally a

brahmana and later became a kṣtriya was a disciple of the ghaṭikā of Kānci[34]. The role he played in settling brahmanas in the Karnataka and Kerala is endorsed by epigraphic sources as well as traditional accounts[35]. This throws fresh light on the nature of expansion of brahmanism in the South; it was not only through "the art of peace", but also by "force of arms".

3) This helps us understand more realistically how the brahmanas or brahmanism survived attacks of the heterodox faiths like Buddhism Jainism. The support enjoyed by those heterodox faiths both from rulers and traders was more than a match to the "spiritual supremacy" or "economic upper hand" of the brahmanas. Now that they had a military arm also to counteract this threat clarifies how they could be more effective. It is significant that the Pallavas following Mahendravarman. one of the worst persecutors of Jainism and Buddhism, were liberal patrons of the ghaṭikā of Kāñci. The inclusion of Buddhist philosophy in the curriculum of the caṭṭānām maṭha can be explained as a prerequisite of its refutation and conversely, the satirical nature in which the caṭṭas are caricatured as voracious gluttons and lustful cupids in the Jain work is understandable. In this connection, a legend prevalent in Kerala may be recalled. When the very existence of brahmanas and brahmanism was at stake, they observed penance and thereupon, the sage Jangama appeared before them and taught them a song with which they could invoke Siva[36]. This song is the prayer in the Cāttirakkaḷi referred to above, and is very important in the Kaḷi.

If the origin and development of the educational-military missionary institution as discussed above is exposed to discussion of scholars and if it survives it, it would add a new dimension to our understanding of the mechanism and implications of the dispersal of orthodox brahmanical culture throughout the Indian subcontinent. It will also be interesting to reexamine the part they played in the feudalisation of the economy and society of North India[37], and its extension to South India in this new light. So also, the political and cultural implications of this institution, both in the *Aryavarta* and its periphery may be inquired into, and this may hopefully throw some new light on the understanding of ancient Indian History and culture.

NOTES :

1. *Indian Antiquary*, V, p. 115, and note.

2. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, III, p. 98, and note.

3. *History of Dharmasastra, III*, (Poona, 1946), pp. 983-4.

4. *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, Delhi, 1966 pp. 983-4.

5. *Epigraphia Indica*, XXVIII, pp. 235-257.

6. Vogel considers this form also an error: "To the authors and those grants the word *cata* was unknown or unintelligible". J. Ph. Vogel, *Antiquities of the Chamba state*, Archaeological survey of India, New Imperial series, XXXVI, (Calcutta, 1911), p. 132.

7. *Travancore Archaeological Series, I, i, pp. 1-14.*

8. *Ibid.*, I, xvi, E, pp. 287-8.

9. The *salai* at Kantalur was very famous for the part it played during the Cera-Cola conflict. The Cola panegyrists found pleasure in describing their patrons like Rajaraja, Rajendra, Rajadhiraja, Kulottunga as having "pleased to destroy the *Kalam* at Kantalur *salai*". This phrase has aroused a controversy among epigraphists add historians ever since Hultzsch. For a detailed discussion, see M. G. S. Narayanan, "Kantallur Salai - New Light on the Nature of Aryan Expansion to South India" *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, (Jabalpur, 1970), pp. 1`5-136. This paper, incidentally, is a detailed and up-to-date study of the wonderful para-military organisation of the armed brahmana militia of the *cattas*.

10. See Umakant P. Shah, "Caṭṭānām Maṭham - A Gleening from the Kuvalayamalakaha", *Annals of the Bhardarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Golden Jubilee Volume, (Poona,

1968), pp 63-70; A. N. Upadhye, "The Kuvalayamalakaha of Ratnaprabhasuri" *Ibid.*, pp. 247-252. For a comparative study of the *Matha* and the *salai* see Narayanan, *loc. cit.*

11. For an identification of the *salai* and *ghatika*, see Narayanan, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-1.

12. *E. I.*, VIII, pp. 24-36.

13. *S. I. D.*, I, No. 146; II, p. 241, T.A.S., II, pp. 1-6; K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *The Colas*, (Madras, 1955), pp. 180-90, n 9; Narayanan *op. cit* etc.

14. See, for example, P.V Krishnan Nayar, (ed.) *Unniccirutevicaritam*, (Kottayam, 1965); *Unniyaticaritam*, (Kottayam, 1966) P. K. Narayana Pillai, (ed.), *Unniyaccicaritam*, (Trivandrum, 1970); Suranad Kunjan Pillai, (ed.), *Padyaratnam*, (Trivandrum 1969); Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, (ed.)., *Candrotsavam*, (Kottayam, 1969); K. Achyutha Menon, *et. al.* (ed.), *Rantu Sandesannal*, (Trichur, 1900) etc. etc.

15. Elamkulam, *op. cit.* pp. 124-7.

16. This old form of entertainment is fast disappearing. For a detailed description of the performance, see Kanippayyur Sankaran Namputiripad, *Enre Smaranakal*, vol. III, (Kunnamkulam, 1964), pp. 105-115.

17. Compare *Ibid*, p. 107 with *Candrotsavam*, Part IV, vv, 26-34 *op. cit.*, pp. 124-7.

18. See Edgar Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, (Madras, 1909), pp. 5-7, 11-15.

19. See T.A.S., II, iii, pp. 131-207, 11. 432-3; ibid, II pp. 34-37 etc. See also Elamkulam P.N. Kunjan Pillai, *Cila Keralacaritraprasnanal*, (Kottayam, 1963), pp. 241-5.

20. For a discussion of *bhattavrtti*, see Sircar, op.cit. p. 51 and references.

21. See R S. Sharma, *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India* (Delhi, 1959, 1968), p. 212.

22. *E. I.*, XXXI, pp. 229-304.

23. See, for example, "sarvān=ēva=rāja=rājaputra=rājasthānīya=uparika=kumārāmātya = pratihara = pramātṛbalādhikrta=caurōddharaṇika=daṇḍapāśika = śaulkika = pratisarika=gramāgamika=cāṭa=bhaṭa=sēvakadīn: *E. I.*, XXXIV, p. 172. 11. 9-10.

24. Prof R. S Sharma speaks of their being billeted on villages and says that they "could enter the house of a peasant, appropriate a portion of raw and ripe crops, sugarcane, salt, and cow's milk; carry off stools, benches or cots; and seize his wood, fuel, grass, chaff etc. There is no reason to believe that they behaved otherwise in other areas". R. S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, (Calcutta, 1965), p 125, In the report, however, "*na=kenacit=pragrahyam*" is very clear. Perhaps Prof. Sharma wants to argue his case negatively. In any case, this is an indication to the function of these groups. See *Annual reports of the Archaeological Survey of India*, 1902-3. p. 252, ll. 22-4.

25. *E. I.*, VI, p 87, ll. 11-16.

26. See Bagh Cave Plate of Subandhu, *C. I. I.*, IV, i pp. 19-20.

27. For reference to the Dharmasastras, see Kane, *loc. cit.*

28. Quoted in *E. I.*, IX, p. 296.

29. See, for example the Mungir Plates of Dēvapālasēna from Bengal, *E. I.*, XVIII, pp. 304-7; Pāṇḍukēśvar Plates of (a) Laḷitaśūradeva and (b) Subhikṣarājadēva from the Garhwal Dist, ibid., XXXI, pp. 277-299; the Samantasar

Plates of Harivarman and the Vajrayogini Plates of Samalavarman from Dacca, Ibid., XXX, pp. 255-286 etc.

30. "Caṭṭa-bhaṭṭa=sēvak=ādīn=anyām=śca......... =brāhmaṇottarān".

31. *E. I.*, XXVIII, pp. 328-334, ll. 10-11.

32. See also, D. C. Sircar, op.cit., p. 52; D. C. Sircar, "Russellkona Plates of Neṭṭabhañjana. Regnal Year 26" *E. I.* XXVIII, pp. 260-1.

33. E I., VII. pp. 24-36. For a discussion, see B A. Saletore, *Ancient Karnatka,* I, (Poona, 1936), pp. 296. ff.

34. *Epigraphia Carnatica*, VII, Sk, 178, p. 115; 192, p. 122; 185, p. 118; IV, Hs., 137, p. 197, VII. Sh. 4, pp. 4-5 etc. Traditions also relate him with this act. For further details, see Saletore, *loc. cit.*

35. See Kanippayyur Sankaran Namputiripad, *Aryanmarute Kutiyerram Keralattil*, III, (Kunnamkulam, 1966), pp. 33-35. Shri Namputiripad has pointed out the similarity between the song and some verses in the Paliyam Plates of Vikramaditya Vargauna, a grant of land to a Buddhist *vihara.* For the grant see *T.A.S.*, I, xii, pp. 187-193 But this similarity, to the present writer's mind, is only apparent and immaterial.

.6. Prof. R. S. Sharma has considered the possible implications of *catas* and *bhatas* in *Indian Feudalism,* in the light of the interpretation of earlier scholars. See Sharma, *Indian Feudalism, op. cit.*

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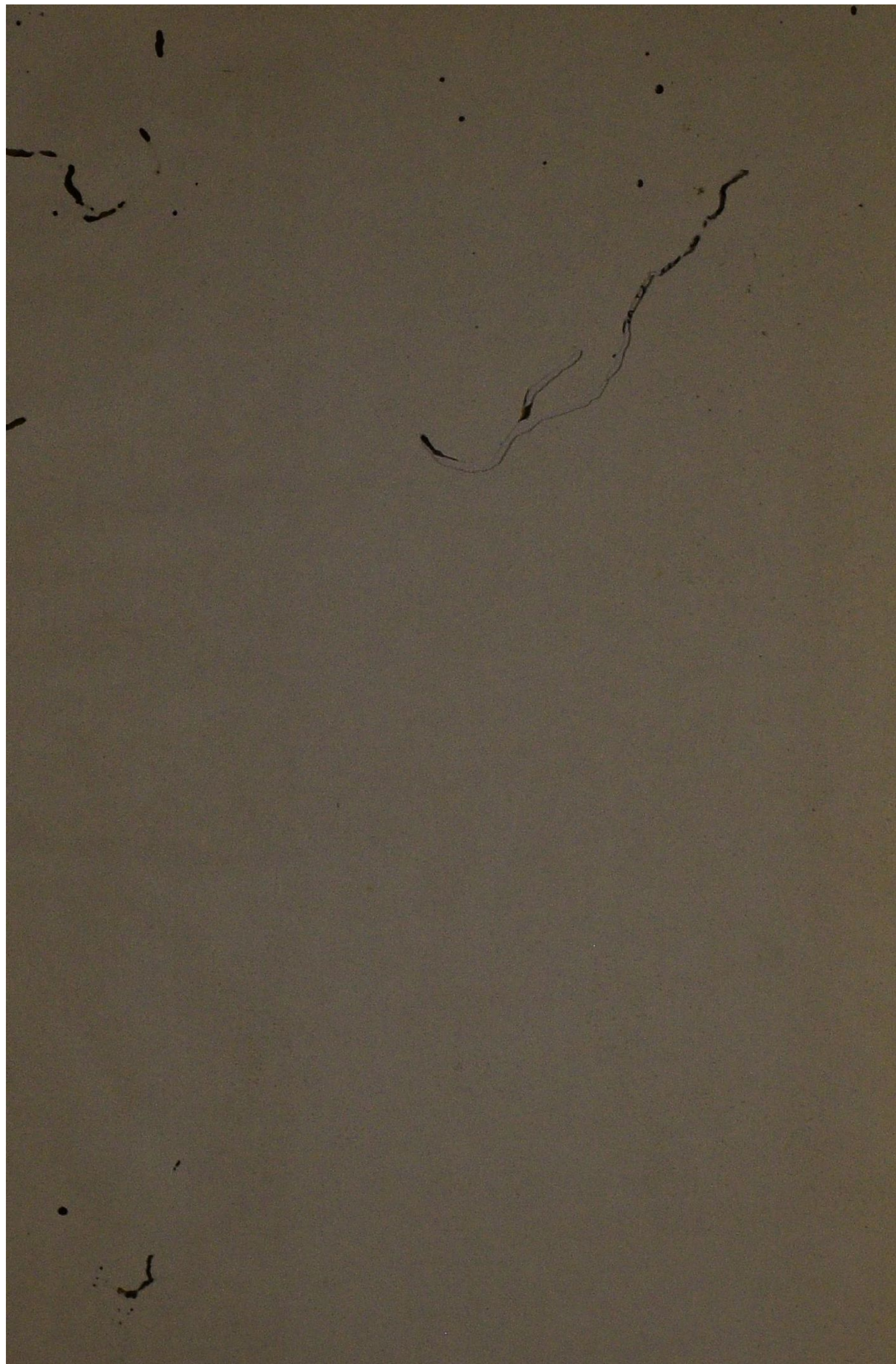
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INDEX



Dr. K. K. N. KURUP,

THE KAYYUR RIOT

It is a study of the development of militant agrarian movement in Malabar and Kasaragod in the second quarter of the present century. It also deals with the nationalist movement and the emergence of the Communist Party in this region. The study is based on primary sources preserved in the Tamilnadu Archives and different courts, and on interviews with important personalities who had participated in the movement.

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